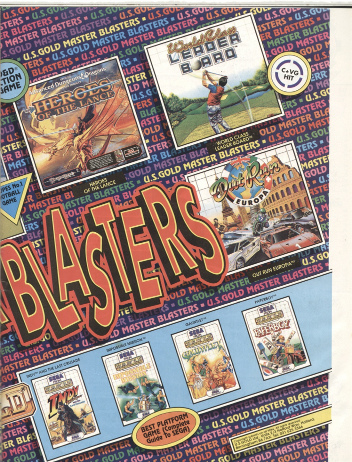

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Lean and mean, raunchy and rad, straight from the alleys of game-freak city, they're here to give you the lowdown on the triffest mag in the Sega Galaxy!



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ISSN 0964 - 2552

POW! DIRTY PIT ACTION!

12 No-holds barred, low-down, sleazy, PITFIGHTER's a real thumperama! Our man in the US of A, Marshal M Rosenthal, reports from America's dark side.





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58 *REVIEWED!* In SPEEDBALL 2 week-kneed, lilly-livered figure skaters can forget it, only the best can compete in this brutal, limb-tearing sport of rollerball horror!

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74 And win the original artwork by Oliver Frey of our fab centre-spread poster, PLUS every ELECTRONIC ARTS Mega Drive cart!

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GAME GENIE!

6 Cheatarama! We break the news of Code Masters' fab new cheat cart, with 1,000 code-breakers built in, and you can create your own! Watch out in future issues of SEGA FORCE for exclusive Game Genie cheat codes!

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31 Yep, that's the great offer for our SEGA FORCE Subscription, all worth tons more meny than the paper it's printed on!

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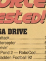
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Gotcha...!

Well, you got this far, so you may as well root around in your pocket — for the dosh, I mean — and go up to pay that nice newsagent person. You'll make his day, punk, promise. And then you''ll be the proud owner of the first ever issue of SEGA FORCE (only 45,000 on the clock and not a dot of rust on it).

No money's been spared on bringing you this eco-sound wonder — they even installed the latest Sankey drinks vending machine to keep us happy (mine's a 45 strong...).

You've met the team on the previous spread, but two more have joined us since we took the pix 'cos they overslept — Alan Green, a Sega fanatic, and slinky Claire Morley whose ambition is to be the first computer journo to hit the headlines in an office sexual harassment case (although Adrian Pitt may pipp her to the post).

What you'll find in SEGA FORCE is games, games and games. We're a boring lot, actually, we play, think, eat and sleep games — which leaves little time over for anything else, so that S.H. case may have to wait a bit. And over the coming millennium SEGA FORCE will be bringing you the latest info on Sega stuff from the gutters of Tokyo 2, the canyons of New York and all points west and the lovely green, foggy dales of dear old You Kay (oh well, grimy Birmingham, then — there's a lot going on in the second city as well as around London.

But it's your SEGA FORCE, too, so feed us, we're hungry to hear from you, just keep it clean... **STU**

BIG KISSES ALL ROUND

First off we'd like to thank Lesley Walker and Sega Europe. Even though they're not in any way endorsed by them, they've been generously supplying some of their games to us for review!

Special thanks this month to Peter Hewitt at KC's Computers & Console Magic (tel: 0509 211799) for supplying lots of official products to us in the nick of time, and also carts for Advance Plays of games like *Run Ark* and *Galaga '91*!

● UK RELEASES FOR DEC/JAN

● Mega Drive
688 Attack Sub
Back To The Future 2
Bonanza Brothers
Buck Rogers
Burning Force
California Games
Dark Castles
Decapattack
QuackShot
F22- Interceptor
Fatal Rewind
Fire Shark
Hard Drivin'
Jewel Master
John Madden 2
Lakers v Celtic
Marble Madness
Mercs
Monster World 3
Outrun Europa
Pacmania
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Phelios
Rings of Power
Road Rash
Rolling Thunder
Runark
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Spider Man
Starflight
Streets of Rage
The Immortal
ToeJam & Earl
Toki
Wrestle War
Xenon 2

● M-System
Alien Storm
Asterix
Back To The Future 2
Bonanza Brothers
Bubble Bobble
Chess
Die Hard 2
Dragon Crystal
Flintstones
G-Loc
Heroes of the Lance
Klax
Laser Ghost
Leaderboard
Line of Fire
Mercs
Ms Pacman
Outrun Europa
Populous
Rampart
Shadow Dancer
Shadow of the Beast
Sonic the Hedgehog
Speedball
Spider Man
Strider
Super Kick Off
Tom and Jerry
Xenon 2

● Game Gear
Baseball
Donald Duck
Factory Panic
Fantasy Zone
Frogger
Galaga 91
Golden Axe
Halley wars
Joe Montana Football
Leaderboard
Ninja Gaiden
Outrun
Pengo
Putter Golf
Solitair Poker
Sonic the Hedgehog
Space Harrier
Woody Pop

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Sega Force and the Mega-CD!

Yeah! If you're reading this on the first day of sale (12 December) — and you should be — you've got a double birthday to celebrate — the birth of Britain's newest and best Sega-dedicated mag and the birth, in Japan, of the new world-beating Sega Mega-CD!

For those among us — and that includes all the SEGA FORCE team (mean sodding bosses) — who can't be attending the umbilical-severing ceremony in Japan today — next month we'll be bringing more details on the wonder machine than you can stuff down the front of your trousers on a wet afternoon (and it's a pretty bulky job too).

The release is accompanied by two CD games: *Sol-Feace* is an all-blasting shoot-'em-up and *Heavy Nova* is a heavy-duty actioner. Also due out before Christmas are *Nostalgia 1907* — an adventure, *Woodstock* — an RPG, and *Tenkafubu*, which is described as a simulation. Our spies in the heart of Tokyo 2 will have much more to say about them in a future ish... if we can translate the kanji!

JUMP HIGHER, HARDER, LIVE FO

That's the new cry for Mega Drivers this spring, thanks to Code Masters' **Game Genie**.

Amazing, isn't it, how everyone soon moans if a game's too easy and then pratts about, complaining that developers make them too stonkin' tough! Nintendo owners are laughing all the way to the end-of-level mega bank in the USA, where cheat carts are selling like Adrian Tipp's pitts. It couldn't be long before a Sega equivalent came along.



The Nintendo game 'enhancer' — soon to be Sega

First out of the bag was Datel's **Action Replay** at £49.99, a cunning device that plugs into the MD cart slot with its own cart slot on top for the to-be-cheated game. Most usefully, Action Replay's slot is dual-shaped, so you can plug Japanese carts into UK MDs.

Unsurprisingly, it was designed without Sega's support, so quite a bit of reverse engineering was needed to figure out the machine's secrets. You can play games without entering the cheats (some 20 cheats are supplied at the outset), but there's no way of working out further codes yourself — these are supplied in a monthly newsletter, giving new additional codes to those supplied with the manual.

Second into the ring is Code Masters with **Game Genie**, which they're revealing for the first time in January at the CES show in the USA. It's been developed from their Nintendo version. Nintendo tried blocking it in the USA, But Codies won the day, and received Sega support for the Genie. The Nintendo version started selling on 15 July and in six weeks sold over 1.5 million. To date, more than 4.5 million have gone!

The Sega Game Genie, which costs £49.95, has built-in intelligence to help you search for new game-beating codes that aren't included in the manual, although Codies' spokesthing, Richard 'Gin Genie' Eddy, says they're researching cheats all over the shop, even as we speak, and there should be over 1,000 supplied with the manual when it all rolls out this spring!

From then on, every month they'll continue to supply codes to SEGA FORCE (and some of the others, too, boo, hiss!), to keep the Game Genie up to date.

In the States a massive TV ad cam-

ON THE BUSES!

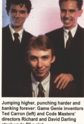
If you see a double-decker bus in the next few weeks, ask the driver if you can have a go. If he gives you a funny look, then it obviously isn't one of the two special Sega buses touring town centres and special events in the pre-Christmas period.

Everyone (even Blakeys!) who visits the buses to take the Sega Challenge will receive a poster, badge and stickers, and stand a chance of becoming the UK 1992 Sega Champion.

Not only that but it's all for a good cause: Radio Lollipop, the charity for entertaining children in hospital. As well as promoting the Lollipop appeal, for every 100 Challengers Sega will donate a Master System to a local children's hospital.

So make sure you're there — if you miss this bus the nest one probably won't be along until the summer — there's never a bus when you need one!

PUNCH R EVER!



Jumping higher, punching harder and banking forever: Game Genie inventors Ted Carron (left) and Code Masters' directors Richard and David Darling stack up to fill a slot

paign, based on the same wild humour as *Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure*, helped shift some of those millions of carts, and that may be used here, if the copyright problems can be sorted out. Whatever, watch that screen, it'll be jumping, punching and living for ever!

ADEY BABE'S MOST MEANINGFUL NATTER BIT

● Everyone's been going on about those Sega ads on t' telly ('why's he live in a truck, w'as he do for a living? Wibble, moan, moan...'), but what about the Christmassy one in *Viz*? I don't like to pour water, but I really think it's going too far — not putting it in SEGA FORCE as well, I mean. Bit of a pisser really...

● And talking about throwing it down the drain, it looks as though Sega might have missed out a bit this Yoof Yooltide because the shop buyers seriously — and we're talking BIG figures here — messed up their estimates on how many Megas and Game Gears they would sell. Not to mention Sonics. I know someone, not too many desks away from where I'm sitting now, who bought a Sonic Mega Drive bundle from Dixons in Worcester and got the drive okay, but is still waiting for his Sonic. Meanwhile the rush at Ludlow Woolies for the five GGs they got in last week left seven dead and 20 injured — and that was before they let the public in...

● A warning: Big Ed Stu's a cheese-eater, eats nothing else, but just before we dashed off to the printers with this ish, he got rushed to hospital with a kidney complaint — too much cheese, so watch it kids — and get well fast, Stu, we need you.

VIRGIN TERRITORY

By Adrian Pitt

Caroline at **Virgin Games** whispered in my shell-like the other day (she's always doing it) to tell me about the oodles and oodles of games coming out in the first half of 1992 for MS and MD.

Corporation

The UCC (Universal Cybernetic Corporation) are basically nasty. They've developed a genetically-engineered war machine and you — secret agent extraordinaire — are out to track down and destroy it. Choose special skills and futuristic weapons, including infra-red image intensifiers and hologram projectors to pit your wits against them.

The computer version was excellent, now the MD version offers 16 action-packed levels, represented in glorious 3D, with tons of baddies, super smooth scrolling, 360° and situation-dependent sound effects to add atmosphere.

Corporation is currently being rejigged by **Core Design** and Virgin tell us that it should be with us around February.

Chuck Rock

Core are busy! Their bestseller *Chuck Rock* makes its way from computer to MD in Feb and MS in May. Our stone-age hero's lost his beautiful wife (Ophelia, for name freaks).

Chuck's arch rival, Gary Gritter, has kidnapped her, forcing Chucky into five action-packed levels, solving puzzles and dodging a horde of antediluvian nasties. He hurls rocks, kicks or belly-bumps his way past them as he races through the Spooky Cave and the Dinosaur Graveyard. This guy'll do anything to free his beloved from the Gritty grasp.

Chuck Rock's a scrolling arcade adventure, offering 500 scenes of colourful and amusing graphics, parallax planes and a great chuck rock 'n' roll soundtrack! You'll have to wait a while, though. Patience is a virtue, unfortunately she's only left her vice behind...

Marble Madness

Yeah! The classic Atari coin-op's about to roll onto Master System. All six labyrinthine levels are there to roll your marbles through. It's certainly tricky stuff, with hoovers, water, and ice to make you

Gutter Talk

even madder — your eyes will be rolling!

The conversion is being done by MS *Pacmania* programmer Steve Lamb, who also did the very *Marble Madness*-like *Gyroscope* for computers a yonk and a half ago. That was triff, so expect a great conversion from Virgin some time in April.

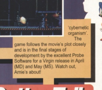
Terminator

The biggest (literally!) movie star of the moment, Arnie Schwarzenegger, is about to shoot and rocket-launch his way onto Master System and Mega Drive in the classic *Terminator* movie licence.

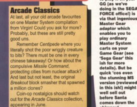
Of course, unlike in *T2*, Arnie plays the baddie — only doing his job! — so in the game you control Kyle Reese, travelling back from the future to save Sarah Connor (Linda Hamilton, phwoar!). Obviously this entails tackling The Terminator (Arnie), an almost-invincible



Colourful screens for chucking rocks about



'cybernetic organism'. The game follows the movie's plot closely and is in the final stages of development by the excellent Probe Software for a Virgin release in April (MD) and May (MS). Watch out, Arnie's about!



Gutter Talk

Arcade Classics

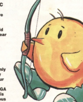
At last, all your old arcade favourites on one Master System compilation from Virgin! Could you ask for more? Probably, but these are still pretty good uns.

Remember *Centipede* where you literally shot the poor wriggly creature to bits? There must be one in every chinese takeaway! Or how about the compulsive *Missile Command*, protecting cities from nuclear attack? And last but not least, the original *Breakout* block smasher that spawned a million clones?

Coin-op nostalgics should watch out for the *Arcade Classics* collection, appearing in June.

SLOW GG SONIC

Boo hoo! You'll have to wait for that speedy blue prickly handheld debut: Game Gear *Sonic The Hedgehog* has sadly been delayed until after Xmas — probably early January. The only alternative way to play it on your GG (as we've doing in the SEGA FORCE office!) is via that ingenious Master Gear adaptor which enables you to play ordinary Master System carts on your Game Gear (see 'Sega Gear' this ish for more details). But be quick 'cos even the stunning MS version (reviewed in this ish!) might well sell out before Santa comes down the chimney!



CUTE CONVERSION

If you thought a cutesy shoot-'em-up was a contradiction in terms, *New Zealand Story* will come as a big surprise! Already a smash hit on home computers, **Tecmagik**'s Master System conversion seems destined to do just as well when it's released early next year.

Set in New Zealand (that caught you out, bet you...), you play Tiki the Kiwi, a very happy resident of Auckland zoo — at least, that is, until he and his family are kidnapped by a psychotic walrus with an appetite for flightless birds!

Being an heroic sort of chappie, he escapes and sets about rescuing his buddies through 21 platform/shoot-'em-up levels, blasting baddies and grabbing goodies all the way.

Programmed by **Simon Freeman** (of *Populous* fame), the Master System game is much closer to the original Taito coin-op than previous versions. Tecmagik claim the graphics are almost 16-bit quality, and if their conversion of Psygnosis's *Shadow Of The Beast* is anything to go by, they could well be right!

And there's good news for footy fans, too! Tecmagik are currently working on the official soccer licence, *UEFA '92 Champions Of Europe*, to be released in time for next year's European Championship. Come on, Eng-er-land! (And Scotland, as well!) (Oh, and Wales aren't bad either.) (And Rutland's fab at this time of year...)

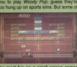


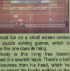
UP POPS WOODY!

In fact this was going to be an ADVANCE PLAY for the Game Gear by our satanically black-hearted Marshal Rosenthal from the depths of the USA, but perhaps Sega's 'Global Releasing' policy is getting into gear (so to speak), because Woody hit the streets here as this issue wound its lively way to bed.

Still, for the words, over to Marshal:

For some reason there are certain folks (the powers that be) that don't want you to play *Woody Pop*; guess they're too hung up on sports sims. But some of



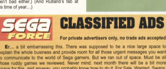


the most fun on a small screen comes from puzzle solving games, which is where this one does its thing.

Woody is this living tree branch trapped in a sawmill maze. There's a ball that bounces from his head, which he uses to smash the blocks making up the rooms imprisoning him (sound familiar? — Pong, *Arkanoid* and *Breakout*?). Too right. Some blocks need a few hits, others just one; objects get in the way of the ball, and always Woody must keep the ball from going past him.

Blocks can release unusual things like soldiers or guards that get in the way — the four o'clock train may steam through. And of course there are the power-up bubbles to catch, affecting the ball's speed, size and power. Once the ball starts moving hard things get tough. Especially the last room, with the giant bubblegum machine and the impervious oak blocks. Three difficulty levels add to an unlimited Continue feature. New this ain't, but at £19.99 fun this is.





SEGA FORCE CLASSIFIED ADS

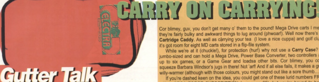
For private advertisers only, no trade ads accepted

Er... a bit embarrassing this. There was supposed to be a nice large space to explain the whole business and provide room for all those urgent messages you want to communicate to the world of Sega gamers. But we ran out of space. Must be all those ruddy games we reviewed. Never mind. next month there will be a bit more space for this, and anyway, you probably know how to do it. For Sale, Wanted, Swaps, Pen Pals, like that. You get 20 words for a quid, 40 for two. Allow up to six weeks for an ad to appear, that's how long the deadlines take.

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Gutter Talk

CARRY ON CARRYING!

Cor blimey, guv, you don't get many o' them to the pound! Mega Drive carts I mean; they're fairly bulky and awkward things to lug around (phwoar!). Well now there's the **Cartridge Caddy**. As well as càrrying your tea (I love a nice cuppa) and golf clubs, it's got room for eight MD carts stored in a flip-file system.

While we're at it (chuckle!), for protection (hur!) why not use a **Carry Case**? It's jumbo-sized and can hold a Mega Drive, Power Base Converter, two controllers and up to six games, or a Game Gear and loadsa other bits. Cor blimey, you could squeeze Barbara Windsor's jugs in there! Not 'arf! And if all else fails, it makes a great willy-warmer (although with those colours, you might stand out like a sore thumb...

If you're dashed keen on the idea, you could get one of these lurid numbers FREE with a SEGA FORCE SUBSCRIPTION (see page 65), but you're bound to be so impressed you'll want two, in which carry case both Cartridge Caddy and Carry Case are made by Curtis, and available from most toy and computer stores. Phew! Time for a tea break, I reckon...

PHIL 'take a break for a scoff' KING



Here's one I prepared earlier...

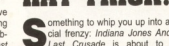
Are you as good a drawist as **Oli Frey**? Better? Okay, that's cool, because he's done so many illustrations for this issue that he's sodded off to the Bahamas for the rest of our lives (not expected to be much longer than this issue anyway). Which means we could well do with some of your stuff to help out, 'spesh on the letters pages once they're fully up and running. Can't guarantee any fab bribes 'cos Big Ed Stu's a mean old bas— buzzard, but what more could you want than the glory of appearing in full glowing colour on the pages of SEGA FORCE... What? Well so could I, actually, but there it is, we have to make do with what we're given. So sharpen the lead in yer pencils and send any drawings you think're fit to print to: THEY WOULDN'T LET ME IN THE ACADEMY SO I SENT THEM TO YOU INSTEAD, SEGA FORCE, Europress Impact, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1JW.

UBI-RENOVATION-SOFT

Over a dozen of Renovation's superlative Mega Drive games are officially making their way over here, thanks to French publisher UbiSoft: *Arcus Odyssey*, *Beast Warriors*, *Dinoland* ('prehistoric' pinball!), *Earnest Evans*, *El Viento* (Japanese comic licence), *Exile*, *Gaiares* (sideways-scrolling shmup), *Gain Ground* (overhead-view combat), *Grenada*, *Heavy Nova*, *Master Of Monsters*, *Raiden Trad* (vertically scrolling shmup), *Syd Of Valis*, *Valis III*, *Vapour Trail* and *Wanderers From Ys*.



Two from *Arcus Odyssey*, above, and *El Viento*. Both titles have been available in the UK from off-white suppliers, now you can go official!



HAT TRICK!

Something to whip you up into a special frenzy: *Indiana Jones And The Last Crusade* is about to burst throbbingly onto the Game Gear!

It's based on the Master System game, with the youthful Indy stumbling over the looting of a valuable archaeological site. The Nazis are after the mythical Cross of Coronado, hidden somewhere in the labyrinthine caverns of Level One.

As well as (literally!) whipping gun-toting baddies into shape, Indy has to watch out for falling stalactites and deadly water pools. An added complication is the need to collect flaming torches — otherwise the screen gradually gets darker until it's completely black!

Fast as a speeding train

Later levels include the classic scene on top of a speeding train, the catacombs under the Venetian museum (X marks the spot), climbing the walls of Castle Brunwald, inside the huge Zeppelin airship, and finally the spooky temple where the Holy Grail is found.

With tweaked gameplay and enhanced graphics *Indy*'s sure looking good for a February release from US Gold, priced £27.99, and more on that one when we get our sticky little fingers on it.

THE REVIEWS — THE RATINGS

In SEGA FORCE you'll see we're not making loadsa fuss over the rating system, none of those fancy bar charts that give the game's temperature, no fancy icons that look good but take an almanac to work out what they stand for — nope, just plain, straightforward ratings as a percentage, because that's what we think you want. We give 'em for **Presentation** (start up screens, attract modes, instructions, player options and so on), **Visuals** (graphics quality), **Sonics** (that's sound, y'know), **Playability** (how easy is it to get going), **Lastability** (how addictive it is) and the **SEGA FORCE Overall** — that's the one that really counts, so you can chuck the rest if you want! Anything with 90% or more gets a **BLASTER**!





Advance Play!

PIT-FIGHTE

Forget that stuff 'bout animation quality and graphics and sound — this ain't no pretty sight. We're talking real he-man stuff here, violent, action, tough. No holds barred, no rules, just you and an opponent. One to win and get all the pot — the other to get a mouthful of loose teeth. Not for fame and glory either — for the really important thing. BIG BUCKS!

So I'm the one's gonna tell you stinkin' pukes how to handle this game. Listen up, I ain't repeating — this here's the simple part: No rules. You fight until someone is lying there and doesn't get up. Don't try and run into the crowd either — they'll just toss you back.

You gotta control one of three fighters: Buzz, an ex-wrestler with a set of he-man type muscles but slow and a bit dead-head; Ty, a kick-boxer with mean moves and speed; or Kato, one of those martial art dudes.

Once you get into that scrolling ring, you're on your own. Help the other guy out if you play two at a time, but he might repay you with a kick to the head. The A button punches anyone close — or picks up a nearby object like a chair to break over his head. Press B to kick and C to jump up — that's good for stompin' someone into the floor. Combinations of buttons are used to pick up a weapon or person and throw, do a mean jump kick, duck, and defend yourself. Hitting all three buttons together performs a super-move. Buzz specializes in brute strength and has a head butt and body slam that's like a mail truck hitting you dead on. Ty's got killer instincts and a flying double kick, while Kato's fast and deadly with a lethal Dragon punch.

Punch hard in the face and spittle flies with the blood

Action and violence

Now you're gonna fight in some pretty grungy places. Start off in the Bar, and work your way through six other areas, including the Warehouse, Garage, Subway Station, and High-rise building.

Facing you are some real bad-ass dudes: the Executioner, Chainman Eddie, Angel (a real tough chick) and Heavy Metal. Don't yet even start thinking of taking on the Ultimate Champion — the Masked Warrior.

Each challenger has his own technique and skills. Pummel him (or her) until their strength meter starts doing the shakes, then pummel till they go stone cold. Now you get money, bonus points for knockouts, more cash for brutality, and match completion (a quick kill rewards heavily). Every third match is a grudge fight where you battle until one of youse been knocked out three times. That means more bucks. Then it's back to fight some more.

Ya can keep track of how you're doing by looking at the screen indicators — though it's pretty obvious if you're lying in a heap on the floor! The score's displayed in dollars — points, HAH! — and the fighter's ID picture shows his pretty puss. The Energy Bar has two levels. The upper shows the fighter's strength; the lower his opponent's. Then there's the clock, the Record (best time for the match) and the KO chart — showing how many fighters you've taken out. And the cutesy hearts say how many lives you've got left.

Since the game uses digitised graphics of the

It's violent, it's seedy, it's the pits! Still, Marshal M Rosenthal bares his chest and goes lower than ever before!

characters, as well as sampled voices, you'll get caught up in the action — and violence. Especially with all the blood and sweat flying about. This game moves real fast, it don't slow down. Yeh — there's a pause, but only wimps use it. This is serious business, with serious consequences. When you smash a guy, he buckles and wavers. Throw a star or knife at him and see the blood rush out. Punch him hard in the face and spittle flies with the blood. If ya can't stand the heat, go play some nice little game with cute characters with Italian names jumpin' about on the screen.

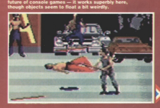
MARSHAL

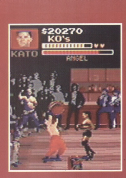
High octane bloodlust drives one or two pit-fighters against ever meaner opponents in Mafia-run fights to the death.

Feeling scared? Turn to page three for Marshal's hints on beating this forthcoming Domark/Tengen release!

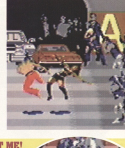
Digitising real people for super-real sprites is the future of console games — it works superbly here, though objects seem to float a bit weirdly.

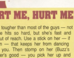














HURT ME, HURT ME!



Angel's tougher than most of the guys — not that she hits so hard, but she's fast and stays out of reach. Use a stick on her — if you can — that keeps her from dancing around you. Then stomp on her (Buzz's Piledriver's good — you pick her up and bounce her head on the floor while sitting down). It don't pay to be a lady here!

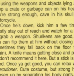
Heavy Metal's tough, but likes to punch — so smash him from behind. It's *Chainman Eddie* to watch out for. This dude's about ten feet tall, and picks you up and strangles you. He also has a mean head butt that hurts like hell. So he's prime for using the weapons and objects lying around. Drop a crate or garbage can on his head — if you're strong enough, cave in his skull with a motorcycle.

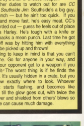
Once he's down, kick him a few times but mostly stay out of reach and watch for a chance to grab a weapon. Shurikens are good, 'cause you can flip them at him without closing in (and sometimes they fall back on the floor to grab again). A knife means getting close and personal — don't recommend it here. But a stick is always good. Once ya get good, you can relax with the *Executioner*. Cute costume, but strong he ain't. Loosen up by separating his body parts. Watch out for the crowd, 'cause they've been known to join in — and they have this bad habit of handing somebody else a weapon to use. Here's another lesson — don't toss someone into the crowd and hang around the edges. Back off so's you don't get wacked by a chair or a loose weapon.

Two other dudes to watch out for are *CC Rider* and *Southside Jim*. Southside's a big guy, likes to punch — but he ain't too quick. If you kick hard and move fast, he's easy meat. CC's kind of weirded out — guess he feels out of place without his Harley. He's tough with a knife or stick and packs a mean punch. Last time he got knocked off was by hitting him with everything that could be picked up and thrown!

One thing to keep in mind is that you can't trust no-one. Go for anyone in your way, and don't let your opponent get to a weapon if you can help it. The worst thing is if he finds the Power Pill. It's usually hidden in a crate, but you never know exactly where to look. Whoever touches it starts flashing, and becomes like Superman till the glow goes out, with twice the hitting power and shielded from others' blows so that no-one can cause much damage.











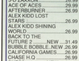
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Advance Play!

RUN ARK

The Jap definition of pro-wildlife may be whale butties, but ADRIAN PITT uses extreme means to save endangered species in the most violent MD game yet.

Run Ark boasts another of those obscure Japlish titles so maybe it'll be renamed for the UK, but whatever the monicker this is a definite hit. In these 'green' times it's nice to see a game about wildlife preservation. I mean not all gamers are psychopathic, slaughter-obsessed monsters, are they? No, of course not. We care about wildlife. And if seeing off those naughty poachers involves AK-47 machine guns, Magnums, rocket launchers and plenty of foot-in-face violence well, it just can't be helped, can it? Shame!

Run Ark opens with a choice of heroes — Gen, Burn, Khan and Jack — but sadly no heroines, which rather undermines its 'progressive' image, especially as half the time you're whipping mini-skirted femme fatales to death!

Each character has differing amounts of **Life**, **Attack** and **Jump** but no special moves, and graphical differences are minimal which makes the choice of characters a lot less exciting than it should be. On the plus side there's a choice of three skill levels, credits and a sound review.

It's then straight into the blood-'n'-guts action. Sadly *Run Ark* is only a one-player game, but a single guy can do a hell of a lot of damage if he puts his mind to it (kill, maim, mangle etc). After a neat intro sequence where our boy is firebombed in his local boozer by poachers, he sets about putting his size 11 boot in as hard as possible.

Cruel to be kind

The game is a multidirectional scroller with many nasty people trying to bash your skull in and being cruel to shy little woodland creatures. Your mission (should you accept it) is to rescue a bunch of animals from the clutches of the enemy. As with all games where the character kicks the proverbial bucket every few seconds, there's an energy bar that whizzes down very fast indeed. Our hero is pretty nifty with his fists and feet though, a master in the ancient martial art of 'No Can Do' he can fill a few body bags. This is where the 'Attack' and 'Jump' meters are important. The higher the rating the better fighter you are. What's more, knocking a guy or gal to the floor and politely waiting for them to get up isn't mandatory — nope, you can grab them by their hair and kick their face in! Alternatively swing them over your head a few times. Ah, what is it to be an ecologically aware, Greenpeace sort of hero!

Sometimes, though, fists and feet aren't enough — you must resort to hardware. There's loadsa limited ammo weapons scattered around, upping the violence ratio even more. The satisfaction felt when blasting a poacher to smithereens with the rocket launcher is immense (Michael Myers eat yer heart out). There are two methods of acquiring weapons, the first is to find them in crates or barrels, the second is to smack an opponent on the bonce and nab their weapon — which of course is more satisfying.

A superb black comedy — I hope it's released here soon

Rest in pieces

Firepower comes in a variety of shapes and potency, ranging from daggers and lead pipes to AK-47s and rocket launchers (eat cordite death, scumbags!). Then when ammo runs out, use the empty weapon to smash people in the face!

Even with all this hardware, Mr Death's scythe is still likely to hack down a few players. As luck would have it there's a credit system allowing you to continue from the point where you chewed gravel — although this doesn't stop the old energy bar dropping for long unless you grab a few power-ups. The only way to make sure you don't feel those bony fingers tapping on your shoulder is to keep moving and hitting hard.

The most likely place for using up credits is the end of each level where the obligatory guardian needs to be confronted. If you think the first couple are tough just wait until you meet the final baddie, a huge alien who laughs at you as he squashes you flat as a pancake.

It's easy to complete the game on Easy level, like many Sega games, and this turned me against *Run Ark* for a short while, but after whopping up the difficulty level my interest was rekindled. Both graphically and sonically the game's great, but it really is the violence factor that brings you back for more.

A superb black comedy which I hope is released in the UK very soon.

ADRIAN



Freed animals help out at critical moments, eagles plucking at your enemies and elephants charging to rip them limb from limb. Below a train ploughs through a couple of villains and, underneath, our hero carries a torch through caverns.

Fighting femmes fatale onboard a poacher ship. You can pick up barrels, whips and a pistol to see them off and rescue Dumbo!

It's non-stop brutality in this game, with opponents being beaten up even when on the ground.



GALAGA '91

Advance Play!

Past-blaster WARREN LAPWORTH loves a good bang and a spot of galactic dancing — and he might even buy his own Game Gear...



In the mists of time, when *Space Invaders* was the supreme and undisputed king of the arcade shoot-'em-ups, the huddled masses awaited the Next Big Thing. Eventually, it arrived, sporting full colour graphics and swooping nasties to blast: *Galaxians*. It was a game that refused to die, updated versions sporting new graphics and more features appearing from time to time to keep the fans happy.

Now Namcot are shrinking it down to 8cm screen for Game Gear *Galaga '91*. A game this simple has unsurprisingly suffered little in the conversion process, bright, fast-moving sprites standing out clearly against the inky blackness of space. Said sprites are various forms of an insectoid race out to conquer the galaxy, circling and swooping in squadrons to assemble into entire fleets at the top of the screen.

A straight-ahead no-frills blaster — a cart to watch out for

Naturally, you're not going to let them rendezvous so easily, and take potshots at them as they appear. Some are sure to get through, so the survivors, now part of a (hopefully ragged) fleet, are lined up one by one and blasted into oblivion.

Not all are sitting ducks: more adventurous insectoids dive toward you, kamikaze-style, and require nerve and better aim to eliminate. Some even have the nerve to steal your ship! They hover near the bottom of the screen and project a tractor beam; if you blunder into it, the alien retreats to the rear of the fleet, towing your ship behind it!

However, as long as you have a life in reserve (if you haven't, Game Over), this is actually to your advantage. If you destroy the thief on his next pass, your old ship glides to the bottom of the screen and locks onto your craft, doubling your firepower. This can be done a second time, for three-way fire — very useful for vaporising aliens with minimal effort.

Galactic bopper

Every two levels you encounter a bonus round, 'This is galactic dancing' (sic). Strings of pacifist aliens stream on and off screen, and points are awarded for each dead dancer. A special bonus is given if the whole troupe is wiped out.

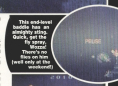
For variety's sake, scrolling levels alternate with standard *Galaxians*-style static ones. Small groups of insectoids fly toward you, until you reach the end of the stage, where a particularly large and powerful alien awaits. It's a tough job, but someone's got to do it, eh?

Galaga '91 and its immediate predecessors hardly set the flashy, power-crazed shoot-'em-up world on fire (no pun intended), and it's unlikely to take the Game Gear market by storm, either. There's nothing fundamentally wrong with it, it just happens to be very simple blaster: left, right, shoot. True, there's the novel power-up feature, easily the most interesting method of any shoot-'em-up, but many gamers will find *Galaga '91* old hat.

But I'm not one of them. I have fond memories of *Galaxians* and any variant gets my approval. Neatly presented, lively and colourful, it's very easy to get into and takes minimum brainpower. While I didn't find it addictive, I thoroughly enjoyed myself, and decided it was time I invested in a Game Gear of my own.

If you like straight-ahead, no-frills blasters, *Galaga '91* is a cartridge to watch out for.

WOZZA



This end-level baddie has an almighty sting. Quick, get the fly spray, Wozza! There's no flies on him (well only at the weekend!)



Wozza loves to deal with those wriggly worms, but this one's deadlier than most he's used to handling!




NAVIGATOR
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USA HERE 'N' NOW

The Black Marshal is here, there, everywhere when it comes to US gaming. Beware!

Marshal M Rosenthal's been doing this stuff out of his New York loft since it started. He's no old fart.

Game Gear titles are fast upcoming — new stuff was well as cool remakes of established 'hot' titles such as Space Harrier and Ninja Gaiden (which seems to be appearing everywhere). Sonic The Hedgehog has been moved to Gear, and it looks great — even with the memory melt-down to 2 megs. Gameplay and levels remain constant: Green Zone, Scrap Rain, Labyrinth — but two all-new levels have been added: the Jungle and Bridge. Both are based on their names (hey, how much 'splanation does 'Jungle' require?), and give you just that bit more of a challenge to deal with. Good thing these are colour, 'cuz some of the images get so small it's only the animation that makes them stand out.

The new stuff is looking real promising. Football may be America's gift to the world, so try out ***Joe Montana***'s version for Gear. The designers have managed to 'shrink' gameplay down to accommodate the smaller screen, but you've still all the choices for plays and control of those tiny, but brutal and beef-caked, men. Still to be seen, and question as to whether it'll be appreciated, is ***Putt And Peter*** (golf), and ***Clutch Hitter*** (baseball). ***Chessmaster*** is also due before year's end but what I'm waiting for down the road in February is ***Fantasy Zone***.

Keep in mind that Game Gear showed up at the worst possible time in the States — being last April when the recession here was strong enough to taste with your tongue. Sega is heavily promoting it now — and between word of mouth, and placing ads for the unit inside their Genesis boxes, Gear is finally starting to be noticed. The huge ad campaign now appearing on TV isn't hurting either.

Snapshot
Slaughter Sport

With two-player simultaneous option, 12 magical spells, 18 horrifying opponents, 24 nifty moves, 306 different bouts, 6 Megabit action and 16-bit graphics, Razorsoft's Slaughter Sport sounds like a statistician's delight. This is going to be one awesome cart, but more on its creators and their games next month...



MOVIE MAGIC

Star Trek 6 is about to hit the movie theatres (the box of *1–5* is out on video for a good low price), with the *Addams Family* film due in two days before. Now how come nobody's done a *Star Trek* cart? Sure there's been a computer game, and Interplay is just now putting out an officially sanctioned IBM version — but why don't they get smart and give us one! The same to ICOM simulations who've been hacking away at their *Addams* game for over a year now, planning a CDROM release for Turbo.

Snapshot
Caliber 50

The body count continues! Why? 'cos Captain 'Windbreak' Addis is back from his arcade hit and breaking wind all over the jungle. The green stuff's swarming with VCs (Victoria Crosses, I think...), so that 50-calibre machine gun, rocket launcher and flame thrower that every well-dressed gent wouldn't be seen dead without, are going to come in handy. Don't know when you'll be seeing this one on the other side, but be ready for the 16-directional shooting and four-directional scrolling.

UNBRIDLED GG

About third-party Game Gear — it's definitely starting to happen. Namco has *Pac Man* ready, and others will shortly be tossing their own. It'll be good to get some variations beyond Sega. Good for Sega too.

HIGHLY ACCLAIMED

Probably the heaviest hitter in the Nintendo world is Acclaim — these guys always get the best titles to license. Before now, they've been restricted to NES games (licence deals with Nintendo), but now Genesis is on the platter. That's partly due to Nintendo's new scheme which allows a NES licensee to produce for another platform (being afraid to restrict like they previously did in order to promote Super NES as strong as possible.).

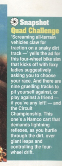
What titles will be showing up from Acclaim is a mystery right now, but an informed source in the company notes that existing licences look VERY promising. To this boy, that reads ***Beetlejuice*** (really hot on their upcoming Gameboy), and some variation on ***Bart Simpson***.

Acclaim is now also the only US licensee to be producing their own cartridges for NES — a new *Simpsons* game coming out in time to catch the holiday rush. The advantage of their doing the production of the cart is lead-time. Once they get the approval of Nintendo (or Sega, since this will be the same), they can get the game made and ready to ship within 30–45 days, smacking off 30+ from the normal 90–120 schedule. The first title for 16-bit Genesis will be announced at CES in Las Vegas in early January. Damn straight I'll be there and let you know quick!

SOAP BOX

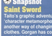
Don't get ticked off to hear about other game consoles and computer platforms being mentioned. I know 'bout loyalty and all that (look how Atari ST users have kept their machine alive!), but face the good news that every system has something good for it. And that means eventually that game should be converted to Sega.





Snapshot
Quad Challenge

'Screaming all-terrain vehicles claw for traction on a snaky dirt track —' yells the ad for this four-wheel bike sim that kicks off with foxy ladies suggestively asking you to choose your race. And there are nine gruelling tracks to pit yourself against, or play against a friend — if you've any left! — and the Circuit Championship. This one's a Namco cart that demands lightning reflexes, as you hurtle through the dirt, over giant leaps and controlling the four-wheel drift.



Snapshot
Saint Sword

Taito's graphic adventure features 'character metamorphosis', which is another way of changing your clothes. Gorgan has conquered the world with his mighty powers of evil, and only the Titan Macress can equal his strength through valour and magic. So it's off to battle with your sword through a maze of seven levels, collecting lost treasures to increase your magical abilities. Able to change into a centaur, Macress can leap, run and kick like a horse, transform into a bird to take wing and switch into fishy mode for the underwater sequences.





Snapshot
Game Gear double fun

Batter Up and Pac-Man are a Namco double-act for the portable gamester. If you don't know about Pac-Man, you can forget it, buddy! Batter-Up's a baseball action sim with 14 teams to choose from, two venues to play, with five- and nine-innings games. If you don't know baseball, now's the time to find out!



Snapshot
Thunder Fox

It's hand-to-hand action in Taito's Thunder Fox as you battle against terrorists on land, sea and in the air. Thunder's the weapons expert and Fox is into fisticuffs, and you can choose which to control as you go up against 14 different foes.

TOEJAM TWO

It may sound crazy, but game designers tend to start working on new projects even while they're finishing up another. Everybody seems to be doing it, some companies do NOTHING but put out sequels based on their original. Here's one: *ToeJam And Earl*. A cool game, just appeared here in the States, and already the *T&E* guys have begun the sequel for their two hip-hopping aliens. 'Give us a year, and then ask about it,' smiles Greg Johnson cruelly. But fortunately the other member of the duo, Mark Voorsanger, is nearby and more malleable. 'Okay,' he says — holding off Greg's wild admonitions, 'we're planning to put more "rooms" in the next game, not just outside landscapes. More things to interact with, that you can move around. You'll have to wait to find out more.' And with that, the two homeboys are history.



Is it Alan Sugar and Gazza? Nope, it's ToeJam creators, Greg Johnson and Mark Voorsanger playing air guitars! Funky, mon!

NEXT TIME

With CD-ROMs starting to get the attention they deserve, and prices of the players dropping to $300 for computers and one existing game console (Turbografx), Sega is due to present theirs real soon. We'll have all the poop on this, and the titles being readied next time. Be prepared.

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Daffy heroes needn't apply for this tale of foul play in indecent places — it turned the BLACK MARSHAL completely quackers.





Each new Disney product seems to push the Mega Drive's graphics a bit more, with *Quackshot* being undoubtedly their best-looking game yet. But after *Fantasia*'s dire gameplay, Donald has a lot to make up for…

As you'd expect there's a fabulous animated opening sequence which, together with text, perfectly sets the scene. Apparently Donald's found a rare treasure map, one to make him even richer than Uncle Scrooge. But Big Bad Pete and his Ducky gang are listening in, and vow to grab the map. Just one step ahead of the gang, Donald gathers up his nephews, jumps in a plane and takes off on a treasure hunt filled with surprises.

Donald begins in one of three locations: Duckburg, Mexico, or Transylvania. A Map View lets the choice be made, then it's into the fray, as soon as the superbly drawn plane drops him off.

All the locations are quite gorgeously done, with some very impressive parallax scrolling in the background on the Mexico level, which also features exploding cacti, scorpions, buzzards and bees. Duckburg is filled with Pete's Henchmen, but there are a few okay guys around worth talking to — especially as they often give you useful objects.

Later on there's the South Pole, a Viking ghost ship and the Maharaja's Palace — chocked to the brim with snake charmers and a giant labyrinth to navigate through. Then there's the exploding maze of the Ducky Gang's Hideout, and the final challenge of Great Duck Treasure Island.

Quackpot

Quackshot is a big game, with each horizontally scrolling level packed with detail. What's more you can often go backwards through levels to retrieve special items, usually needed at other locations. This keeps you hopping in and out of your plane, crisscrossing the globe to solve various puzzles.

Frantic platform action that requires ultrafast reflexes

Each location consists of several different levels and fortunately when you revisit somewhere you normally don't need to complete previously finished levels. You enter and exit locations by calling Donald's plane at flag markers which crop up just before a new section.

Keep in mind that most things animated and inanimate are bad news for Donald. He can't touch them without losing energy in proportion to the power of the attack. A flower pot's no fun, but it's a pleasure compared to being zapped by a slime ball. So blasting nasties with a yellow plunger is always a good idea — it not only freezes them in their tracks, but lets him walk through as if they didn't exist. Only Disney could turn a plunger into a weapon, and it's hilarious in action.

Often the flashing baddie drops a useful object: money bags, corn, all kinds of food and extra lives — this is good stuff! But the best has to be finding those red-hot chilli peppers. We all know that Don is kind of excitable to begin with, but when he downs enough peppers, he totally loses it and begins rockin' like a malt shake mixer in overdrive. While under the influence, he's a raging high-speed freak that's invulnerable to anything and everything — a superlative effect.

Quackling popguns

While Donald has an endless supply of ordinary





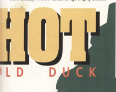




yellow plungers to fire, other colours come in handy. Red sticks to walls, enabling Donald to climb them, while Green sticks to pesky airborne critters so you can grab a free ride through the skies. Picking up corn primes the popgun, which fires in an arc that blasts enemies right off the screen. The Bubblegum shooter destroys obstacles, if Donald has some gum.

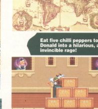
The Select screen is where you make the choices for weapons and items to use, check out the area, and call the plane to go elsewhere (which isn't always possible). It also functions as a Pause. And you certainly need the odd rest from the frantic platform action which requires ultrafast reflexes and super-accurate control due to Donald's realistic inertia.

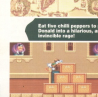
What I hate, especially in Mexico, is jumping onto the tall mountain pillars that move horizontally as well as vertically — because you have to time it just right. And I mean exactly, some of them start moving only when you're just at the corner of the screen or in one position relative to them exactly. Which makes things mighty difficult





Eat five chilli peppers to put Donald into a hilarious, and invincible rage!





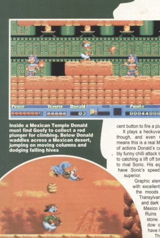
Conquer this bat-infested abode to confront the evil count himself. Beat him and you can fly on to the Maharajah, South Pole, Egypt and spooky Viking Ship. Tip; try the Maharajah first!

I loved *Castle Of Illusion* so much I almost bought *Fantasia* without playing it! Thankfully I didn't, but Disney fans need have no such worries over *Quackshot* which sets new standards for arcade adventures. The graphics are the best yet, Donald's animation isn't always perfectly smooth, but with the amount of astonishing detail and wide range of actions you don't really notice. It's a feast for the eyes, but what's new is a more involved game structure. *Quackshot* is no *Populous*, but it does mix in enough depth with its platform action to keep your mind more than busy. Simply fantastic!

STU

Ride through a ghostly Viking Ship's rigging in a Dead Man's Hoist

Return to Duckburg to get the Hero Key from a copper.



Inside a Mexican Temple Donald must find Goofy to collect a red plunger for climbing. Below Donald waddles across a Mexican desert, jumping on moving columns and dodging falling hives

— what with trying to avoid the bird dropping the hornet's nest on you, Pete's Henchmen firing their weapons, and various assorted other pug-uglies.

A tip here is to get a good feel for letting go of the direction pad when you hit the button to jump. While you have to give a bit of OOMPH before you leap, letting go of the pad frees the controls when you have to quickly move your hand over to the adjacent button to fire a plunger or other weapon.

It plays a heckuva a lot better than *Fantasia* though, and even *Castle Of Illusion*, which means this is a real MD classic. The wide variety of actions Donald's capable of, from the incredibly funny chilli attack to simply sliding on his belly to catching a lift off birds, makes him a character to rival Sonic. His eight-location world may not have *Sonic's* speed but its graphic detail is superior.

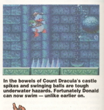
Graphic elements are truly outstanding with excellent use of colour to enhance the moods of the various locations. Transylvania is appropriately misty and dark with slime dripping all over, Mexico is bright and hot, the Aztec Ruins are cold with blocks of stone. It turns your TV into a window on the kind of world we'd have if Disney was God.

The animation of the characters (except the Henchmen who seem a bit dull) is A-1 — favourites here are the jumping snakes (resembling more something out of *Sesame Street*) who inhabit Duckburg's garbage cans, and the Ghost inside the Count's castle in Transylvania. Ongoing effects don't slow the game down, or Donald for that matter. And his animation looks just like a cartoon, with the same kind of texture and sculpting that makes for good 3-D.

Sound is important too. Effects work very well, the plunger goes 'sprong' when it hits, and the other bleeps and blaps make sense. Music is a bit hit or miss though. While various sections have some really dynamite music sequences to excite the action — during an end screen or the like — the overall 'tune' of some of the levels is a bit simple, but nevertheless cheerful and fun.

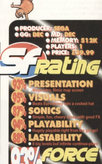
Which is the whole idea behind *Quackshot*. There isn't anything really new as far as the platform/shoot-'em-up parts go. But being able to jump between locations, and having to work at getting to that treasure by thinking makes a difference in the gameplay to the better. Having unlimited continue-plays helps too. This, combined with the excellent animation and graphics make it a killer game for platform fans. And all without lots of flying body parts and deadly aliens.

MARSHAL



In the bowels of Count Dracula's castle spikes and swinging balls are tough underwater hazards. Fortunately Donald can now swim — unlike earlier on.






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wasps, crazy crabs and wheelie porcupines! They're all beautifully animated.and add a real sense of fun. Kill them with a supersonic spin attack, automatically activated whenever Sonic leaps (press any button). Hit a creature when you're not in a ball and you lose a life, unless...

Unless you've got some rings. These are scattered all over the place and give loadsa bonus points at the end of the level. More importantly they act as a sort of shield. When hit by a baddie you lose all your rings first, and only if you're hit again do you lose a life. This makes *Sonic* very friendly to newcomers: you can muddle through the first few levels in no time by grabbing rings as soon as you're hit. Further help is provided by TVs! Spin-attack them for power-ups such as super-speed, limited-time invulnerability, a shield and extra rings!

The game is split into six Rounds, each divided into three Acts. Hold enough rings at the end of an Act and you get to play a special stage. This takes the form of a rather large pinball machine, with rings and game-continues to collect. Be warned, there's a time limit: escape before it runs out or you won't receive any bonus points. It's a great touch to the game watching young Sonic bounce off walls and landing on springs!

The most satisfying part, though, is when you complete a Round and set free little bunnies and birdies from the Doctor's huge alloy containers. Before that there's the little matter of defeating Dr Robotnik himself, who has different attack methods for the end of each Round, but few of which are all that tough.

Could it possibly be as good on MS? Well ADRIAN PITT creamed himself, but who cares what he thinks — it's Sonic Tonic!

They said, 'Adrian, review *Sonic The Hedgehog* on the Master System.' 'Ha!' I scoffed, 'It won't be a patch on the Mega Drive game. The graphics will be flickery, the scrolling dodgy and the gameplay unbearably dull.'. Hush my mouth, I scoffed too soon!...

MS Sonic is just as prickly, fast and all round wonderful as any glitzy 'Mega' sprite. The character which amazed everyone as the pinnacle of 16-bit wizardry is perfectly recreated: he runs, he leaps, he looks up, he crouches down, he rolls, he gasps for breath underwater, he dies — there ain't nothing this critter can't do!

Obviously the backdrops aren't quite as detailed as the MD, there's no animation, but heck — they're damn fine coffee anyway and the scrolling is flickerless and super-fast. The speed when Sonic picks up a pair of well-radical training shoes is simply amazing.

Undoubtedly the best thing on MS, Sonic sets new standards

There's also a collection of amusing tunes running through the acts: like the MD they're simplistic but enjoyable, and the ditties for special events like meeting Dr Robotnik help create a real sense of occasion.

In A Spin

The basic gameplay still isn't all that complicated — get to the end of the level as fast as possible, avoiding nasties such as mutant fish, angry

Super Sonic

MS *Sonic* isn't a straightforward conversion though. There's so many changes MD fans are advised to get a Power Base. The map layouts are completely different and the actual graphic style is often radically changed, culminating in a superb skyship which wasn't even on the MD! Where the styles are the same, such as the wondrous underwater levels, the graphics come so close as to be almost identical. Then there's the Map which appears before each level, showing your progress so far. It all makes you wonder which is the better machine! It never pays to be a cynic.

This version of *Sonic The Hedgehog* is undoubtedly the best thing I've seen on the MS. It just goes to prove how some software companies are copping out by releasing inferior games with poor graphical content, presentation and gameplay.

Sonic sets new MS standards and gives the MD something of a red face, with its most famous game equalled if not bettered! ***ADE***

SONIC THE H



What It Is To Be A Hedgehog!

A hedgehog's lot is not a happy one! For young Sonic, not only is there the threat of being mown down by passing juggernauts, or turned into a packet of crisps, the evil Dr Robotnik has turned all the animals in the forest into robots and it's up to our mate to save the day.

Starting in Green Hill Zone, Sonic negotiates hills, dales and underground caverns. The Bridge Zone is filled to the brim with crumbling platforms, lakes and high cliffs. Roll Sonic into a ball and he'll scale those heights, no sweat. Watch out for piranhas, lizards and flying beasties in Jungle Zone, and don't forget to collect those life-saving items. The Labyrinth Zone is set under water, so ensure you breathe in plenty of air bubbles when the timer appears. There's a maze to negotiate in Scrap Brain Zone, with booby traps to avoid and conveyor belts to slide across. Dr Robotnik throws just about everything at you in Sky Base Zone, the final level. Fending off deadly laser beams and missile shots, Sonic has to find the Doc's trusty blimp.

Extra rings and continues are found in the bonus stage

Above: Singed botty for Sonic when the lightning strikes! Left: Beam me up Scotty, the brave little hedgehog takes a trip in a transporter.

Bashing it out for the last time with Mr Tache!

The only serious flaw in *Sonic* is game difficulty. One reviewer here completed the game in days, which was a problem with the MD game too. Collecting all the Chaos Gems secreted through the game adds some lastability, but in truth this is such a wonderfully playable game I've no doubt you'll come back again and again, even if you do complete it. Simply amazing and, via Master Gear converter, unbelievably brill on GG! **STU**

Up, up and away! Dodge the big guns or the bullets will bonk you on the head.

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- GG: TBA
- MD: OUT NOW
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- PLAYERS: 1
- PRICE: £29.99

SF Rating

- 90% PRESENTATION — Sub-game, continues and end reward
- 97% VISUALS — Unbelievable Sonic sprite, fast-scrolling
- 84% SONICS — Lots of varied, light-hearted tunes
- 98% PLAYABILITY — Incredibly playable, simply irresistable
- 84% LASTABILITY — Too easy, but you'll still keep playing
- 95% FORCE — Sets a new standard for MS games

EDGEHOG

Are stranded space aliens ToeJam and Earl related to James 'Funkmaster' Brown? MARK CASWELL donned rad shades and investigated.

Yo dudes, wha's happ'nin'! (Cue spooky hand shapes.) This killer cartridge gets on down right from the options screen. You can boogie on down and strut yo' stuff to six chill tunes, ToeJam and Earl groovin' with their own funky dance routine, and even have a jam session. Joypad direction and button combinations give access to the game's many unusual and often hilarious sound effects: chickens clucking, phones ringing, maniacs laughing, various cartoon sounds... There are too many to mention (my personal fave is the rooter-induced belch) but all are well chosen and most are clearly sampled.

When you fancy a break from boogieing, how about playing the game?! Both characters are up for control, so choose an alien dude or rope a pal into the game to keep the duo together.

ToeJam and Earl have a big problemo. It began when Earl insisted that TJ allow him to pilot their spacecraft, the Righteous Rapmaster. Now Earl (the fat one who looks not unlike Quinch from the old *2000AD* strip) is to astro-navigation what a drunken hippo is to breakdancing. It's little wonder, then, they smacked into a huge asteroid and crash-landed on a very unfunky backwater planet called Earth. Yes, the most excellent dudes are here to find the pieces of Rapmaster, and a very entertaining game their escapades make, too.

A magic elevator is used to travel between levels (don't ask me why), so it's mind the most excellent doors, please, and stand by for action. The play area is a little difficult to describe, but if you imagine a chain of huge islands hanging in the middle of space, you'll have some idea of the game's interpretation of our planet. Each level is many screen's in size so a handy map can be called up at any time. However, the map's obscured with tiles, removed one at a time as new areas are reached.

When (rarely) encountered, spaceship parts are easy to spot — mainly because they sit on a pedestal with a huge neon sign pointing to them! Be warned, not all levels contain components.

But there's more to it than spaceship hunting. Exploration frequently unearths unusual items, in the shape of brightly-wrapped presents, some handy, others downright dangerous. These are stored in a present inventory, usually anonymously, so you don't know their contents until they're opened.

Useful gifts include cash, decoy players, Icarus wings (for flying), rubber rings (for swimming), extra lives and rocket skates. On the minus side are bogus objects such as thunder clouds, sleeping potions and electric buzzers.

A number of very weird and wacky characters populate the game. Some are helpful (for a price) but others go all-out for the kill (or at least contribute to the character's demise). Guess which type is the most abundant? (Typical, eh?)

As your character is battered around and generally put upon, his energy level will drop very quickly indeed. There are a couple of ways to increase energy. One is to collect food (pizzas, fudge, cake etc), but bad food such as mouldy bread and cheese (despite what the Ed says) aren't good for ToeJam and Earl and deplete their energy reserves.

The intrepid duo communicate via floating text and their words indicate the value or otherwise of digested food. For instance, if a piece of tucker is good it may get a 'not bad', 'yummmm' or 'wow'. On the other hand, vile foods will prompt an 'ick', 'yuck' or 'gross'.

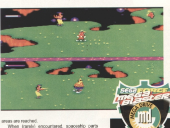
The other method of restoring energy is to find a wizard. For a couple of dollars, he'll return your character to full health (accompanied by a rousing chorus of 'Hallelujah').

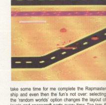
Make no mistake about it, *ToeJam & Earl* is a **very** weird game. The graphics are bright and vibrant, with the ice cool duo strutting their funky stuff in some of the most rib-tickling escapades since DR and Quinch (my heroes) hit Earth.

It took me several plays to even grasp the basics, but since then I've been firmly hooked. It'll take some time for me complete the Rapmaster ship and even then the fun's not over: selecting the 'random worlds' option changes the layout of levels and spacecraft parts every time *ToeJam & Earl*'s played.

A totally awesome experience; buy it this instant.











TOEJAM & EARL



Yo, wha's up! The name's ToeJam and this my homeboy, Big Rappin' Earl. If you haven't heard of us, Earl and myself are aliens from the planet Funkotron — yeah, outer space. Maybe you've heard of the Righteous Rapmaster Rocketship, our ultra cool, bass-thumpin', rhythm-pumpin', crank-it-to-th'-max space vehicle, with dual mega-watt speakers.

Yo, anyways, ma mainman Earl and I recently ran into a small problem. More specifically, we ran into a large asteroid and were shipwrecked on some dangerously insane planet called Erth, or somethin' like that. Totally bogus!

Clock it — if you want th' whole story, you should check out me and Earl's latest rap, which they tell me you can win. Yo, peace, *SF* dudes.

Er, yeah. Rad extra terrestrials aren't *quite* our specialist subject, but we *think* ToeJam's kindly donated a hundred copies of his latest cassette single.

A game as quirky as this is sure to develop a cult following and no one should be satisfied without a copy of the rap. But it ain't packaged with the cart and it ain't for sale... so you'd better enter the Sega Force comp, hadn't you?

And how do you get your hands on one of these kickin' cassettes? Simple, just answer the following four questions, based on another ice-cool travellin' duo, Bill and Ted, stars of silver screen, comic book and cartoon series. Check 'em out:

1 ▲ What everyday object do Bill and Ted travel around time in?
2 ▲ Which most excellent time-skipper provided B and T with the time-travelling device?
3 ▲ The most righteous dudes have appeared in two motion pictures. What are they?

Print your answers on a postcard or back of a sealed-down envelope and post it to: TOEJAM AND CO COMP, SEGA FORCE, EUROPRESS IMPACT, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1JW. Entries to arrive by 31 January, 1992.





Who's got the number of the beast? Which version should you buy, Mega Drive or Master System? IAN OSBORNE's got the answers — if he survives the test.

Reviewed!

SHADOW OF

Okay, goat face! To fulfil your destiny and kill the Beast Lord, you must battle your way through several different regions inhabited by hostile creatures created by foul sorcery. It'll take every ounce of your superhuman strength to punch, kick and shoot your way to the Beast Lord's stronghold deep in the forest.

Needless to say, contact with creatures depletes your strength. Luckily, potions and weapons can be found to aid your quest.

The game opens with you on that famous, parallax-packed open field. It seems you have a choice of directions: down a well, right to a castle, or left to a tree and an entrance into the labyrinth. However, the latter (from which the well is an escape route) must be explored first to find objects required for the castle. The labyrinth is a huge series of underground caverns to keep mapping fanatics happy for weeks. Other features include locked doors, (and keys of course), tentacles and claws that pop down or up at the most unfortunate moments and plenty of wildlife.

Although combat is fairly standard, the game's lifted out of the standard monotonous shoot/beat-'em-up mould by the sheer variety of the creatures, which are beautifully drawn and animated in both versions. You encounter dragons that you just punch to kill, insects to leap over, flying demons to either kill with a leaping kick or duck under, and much more. Once underground there's the added hazard of various cliffs and crevasses to jump down or across — careful not to fall too far, and beware of the spikes.

Of course, with two versions of the same game being released by two different companies, comparisons are inevitable. Besides, I bet all you lucky joypad pounders with Sega Mega Drives with Master System Converters are wondering which to buy. Well wonder no more...

The MS version looks technically stunning

The Tecmagik MS game

The first thing you notice is they've captured the feel of the original. There may not be as many levels of parallax scrolling but it's close — the MS version looks just as technically stunning as the original did on a 16-bit computer. The weird graphic imagination of the sprites and backdrops has been nicely captured. Then when you start exploring the maze the four-way scrolling is silky smooth, while graphic flicker is nonexistent.

But Tecmagik haven't been content simply to work graphic miracles in a straight conversion; they've actually set out to improve the game! There are minor enhancements such as the way the main sprite's chest actually moves as he breathes and the way the hearts showing your lives beat on-screen. This all adds to tension but yes, I did say *lives*: there's three now which — together with the elimination of tedious disk-accessing — massively decreases the frustration level.

Other thoughtful touches include the fact that you've got an inventory, so eight objects can be carried and used whenever you want. In the Amiga game you often had to use potions as soon as you collected them, and there was only one type of key, one way of approaching every problem. In MS *Beast* there's several different keys, and red herrings to decoy you — more of a game in short. Playability is also enhanced by end-level baddies being a bit less tough than their frustratingly difficult Amiga counterparts.

As before, power-ups are 'hidden' in mounds of stone, chests, barrels, etc. and include keys, weapons and potions that restore all or part of your strength (plus a few poisoned ones that are less helpful!).

On the negative side, I could have done with-

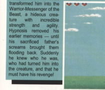




BESTIALITY BEGINNINGS

Shadow Of The Beast was a landmark game for both the Amiga and Psygnosis, the software house behind it. Forget the big price tag, the superlative presentation, the awesome sonics, *Beast* wowed everyone with layer upon layer of parallax scrolling, creating a uniquely impressive graphic sensation. Demo-ing in shop windows it sold Amigas and Psygnosis games by the crate-load. The only flaw was gameplay — beneath the jaw-dropping graphics lay a stunningly conventional arcade-adventure.

A strong part of the original's appeal was a grim tale of mystical evil-doings. The beastly hero started life as a normal baby but was swiped and taken to the temple Necropolis. Here, a series of rituals transformed him into the Warrior-Messenger of the Beast, a hideous creature with incredible strength and agility. Hypnosis removed his earlier memories — until his sacrificed father's screams brought them flooding back. Suddenly he knew who he was, who had turned him into the creature, and that he must have his revenge!







Mega Drive screenshot

F THE BEAST

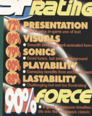
out the Sci-Fi bits which mar both games; the missiles and high-tech hardware in the castle clash with the overall mythical, magical feel. Nevertheless this is a classic example of just how to do a conversion and highly recommended.

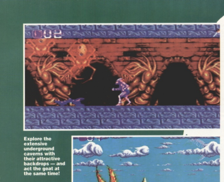
IAN











Explore the extensive underground caverns with their attractive backdrops — and act the goat at the same time!

Nasty creepy-crawlies can be punched or jumped

Admire the thirteen levels of smooth scrolling parallax.

● PRODUCER: ELECTRONIC ARTS
● GG: TBA
● MEMORY: 512K
● PLAYERS: 1
● PRICE: £39.99

SF Rating

60% PRESENTATION
● No intro or continues, nice interlevel pics

90% VISUALS
● Good with sprites improved over original

70% SONICS
● Atmospheric soundtrack

79% PLAYABILITY
● A little frustrating to begin with

80% LASTABILITY
● Simplistic gameplay can be repetitive

80% FORCE
● A professional conversion of a somewhat dated game

Electronic Arts' MD offering

As you would expect, the 16-bit version benefits from improved background detail and increased layers of parallax scrolling which make for a pretty close copy of the Amiga original. Unfortunately it's not the game to bash Amiga owners with.

Although the lack of horrendous disk-accessing makes it undoubtedly better, there are embarrassing omissions: the superbly atmospheric intro has gone (to save memory presumably) and the awesome David Whittaker soundtrack is but a shadow of its former self. To add insult to injury a great scene-setting short story has been chopped to just a page and has been severely toned down, so much so that it reads more like the blurb for an Enid Blyton book. To be honest this flaw is also likely to afflict the MS manual, which we haven't seen yet, but it's still disappointing.

All these failings hit hard at the 'specialness' of the game, and the one serious enhancement, a great screen-wiggling teleport effect, isn't enough to compensate.

Electronic Arts have also neglected to adopt Tecmagik's game improvement — there's no inventory, potions must be used when collected and there's just one life. The original-style graphics remain stunning — watch out for the spiders in the castle! — but I do miss the MS's beating heart and breathing Beast.

Shadow of the best?

Moaning aside, the 16-bit version is a darned good game. It is fast, the graphics are well drawn and animated, and the programming is top-notch. It's just that the computer game on which it's based is getting a bit long in the tooth, and although the programming is tighter, no attempt has been made to seriously update the gameplay. Tecmagik's programmers have done just as good a job, but with more of a feel for the game — the 8-bit version gives an incredible feeling of danger that's sadly absent in its big brother. Also, they've done a superb job of bringing it up to date. Given the choice, I can honestly say I prefer the MS game.

IAN





Before entering the castle, just one of the many superb static pics which really add to the atmosphere



JOHN MADDEN'S FOOTBALL '92

One of the world's finest sports sims has just got better. STUART WYNNE dons shoulder pads for a screen play.

He may not be blue, have spiky hair or be all that fast in his sneakers any more, but John Madden is just as much a Sega hero as Sonic. His original game wasn't simply the best gridiron sim ever, it was so playable people who hated the real thing became addicts.

The heart of American football lies in complicated plays, the tactics of how teams line up and then move once play begins.

Madden makes hundreds of permutations of sets of players, formations and tactical plays easily accessible through on-screen menus and diagrams. You can play right from the start — although a little jargon must be learnt to be truly comfortable. However, the more you play, the more you understand and the more ambitious you become.

Razzmatazz Realism

Tactics are only half the game though; the other is spectacular incidents perfectly recreated by some of the best animated graphics yet seen in a sports game. The detail, fluidity of movement and range of actions is astonishing.

Yet controlling players in all this drama is deceptively simple. In fact, the computer does it all until you intervene by touching the joypad. Once you do, the quick responsiveness makes standing back impossible. The Defending gamer selects which player to control as the players line up, then once play begins another key press switches control to the player nearest the ball. The Offending gamer first has control of the Quarterback and in a passing play mini-screens appear, offering an A/B/C button choice of who to throw to. As the ball leaves your hands control passes to the receiver. All the buttons are used allowing you to jump, catch, spin, high-step, charge and dive.

Madden is one of those rare things, a complex game easy and fun to play, but with the detail to allow constant improvement by practice. Even rarer it merges detailed tactics with arcade game-play so well, few people will be able to resist it.

STU



Improving Perfection

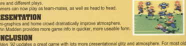
Madden '92 isn't a full-blown rewrite, more an update to ensure its superiority over the forthcoming *Joe Montana 2*. Enhancements include…

GAMEPLAY

* A superlative replay mode with frame-by-frame motion isn't just for show — 'pass interference' calls can be overruled.
* Players can be injured, leading to a hilarious scene where an ambulance rams through the teams. Sub your Quarterback if he's taking too many hits.
* The weather plays a bigger part with wind added to rainy and snowy conditions (now selectable, as are dome and Astroturf!).
* More and different plays.
* Gamers can now play as team-mates, as well as head to head.

PRESENTATION

* Mini-graphics and home crowd dramatically improve atmosphere.
* John Madden provides more game info in quicker, more useable form.



CONCLUSION

Madden '92 updates a great game with lots more presentational glitz and atmosphere. For most old-style *Madden* owners there's not really enough to justify another £40. The basic game's the same and there's still no full season, but for newcomers it's simply even more unmissable. Brilliant!

American Football Explained!

A sport which takes four hours to play an hour-long match isn't easy to describe in brief, but here are the basics.

Each match begins with one side booting the ball as far as possible. The OFFENCE team will then run the ball as far forward as possible before being tackled. The position of the tackle sets the line of scrimmage and both teams huddle to set their tactics, or PLAYS.

Each team fields eleven players, but unlike real footie there's no end to substitutions with whole new sets of players being called in for each Play. How these players are then positioned on the pitch, and how they move once play starts, is the subject of more strategy than WWI and II combined.

The Offence want to get the ball across the DEFENCE's goal line for a Touchdown (6 points, plus an extra point for a subsequent kick through the goalposts). They can carry the ball forward by running with it, RUSHING, or by throwing the ball, PASSING, to a RECEIVER who then runs with it.

The Offence has four attempts, or DOWNS, to advance the ball ten yards or more. Succeed and they get a FIRST DOWN, and four more attempts to advance another ten yards. If they fail play turns over and they become the Defence. The Defence can also attempt to gain control of the ball by INTERCEPTING (catching) a pass, or by pulling it out of a runner's hands.

See, it's simple!

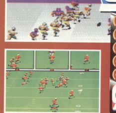


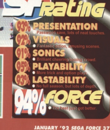
John Madden was so good it left little room for improvement. However, *Madden '92* is more atmospheric with the cheering/booing home crowd. By far the best addition, though, is the Instant Replay: great for reviewing close calls — causing a lot of heated arguments!

The major tactical improvement is the inclusion of a proper Run & Shoot formation, plus new plays like Rollout pass, Endaround, a proper Hail Mary, and a neat option play where the ball is tossed to the Halfback who can pass it or run. It's good to see all 28 teams available too (with New Jersey and Oakland replacing NY Jets and LA Raiders), but I'd still have appreciated a full season.

Nevertheless, if you missed the original, *Madden '92* is an essential purchase. Even as a 49ers fan, I can't see *Joe Montana 2* beating this! **PHIL**









IAN OSBORNE dons plus fours and a stupid sweater to see if the legendary golf game scores an albatross on MS and GG.

WORLD CL LEADERBO

Leaderboard owes much of its success to a sophisticated, but easy-to-understand control system. After aiming your shot with a cursor, pressing Button 1 sends the swing-power column shooting up; release fire to stop it. Now the 'hook and slice' bar starts moving. Fast reactions are needed again — stopping above/below the line, the ball will be hooked/sliced. This system is a little tricky to begin with, but once mastered the amount of control you have over shots is stunning. Experts use hook and slice to compensate for wind conditions and holes-in-one are possible!

Other features include rotating the view to the left or right and accessing a disappointing overhead map view. A 'punch shot' facility can also be activated to send the ball on a much lower trajectory — perfect for beneath the trees.

For all its faults, it's fun to play

JOIN THE CLUB

You get a full set of thirteen clubs to play with, each with maximum and minimum range (shown in manual). On the green the putter's automatically selected and a different control system comes into play. You just set power and direction, there's no slicing or hooking, but must account for the slope of the green — shown by a stake-'n'-shadow diagram.

Shots are practised on the putting green and driving range. The latter's a perfect way of practising judgement of power and hook & slice. After every shot, your spent ball remains on the fairway — invaluable when assessing power. The putting green, however, is disappointing, with a randomly placed ball and a varying slope, but only one shot at each hole! I'd much prefer to play each ball until it is holed, however many shots it takes.

Plays well solo

Budding Faldos can tackle the four courses: three based on real ones, the other specially designed for the game. Up to four players can play, each choosing independently from three skill levels: novice (automatic club selection, no wind, no hook & slice), amateur (no wind) or professional. Like most sports sims, it's great fun played with friends, but for once it plays equally well solo.

Slow on the draw

As you can see from the screenshots, graphics aren't exactly breathtaking. The golfers are well



The water hazard on the left makes for a tricky approach shot to the green so make sure you don't hook it! (GG)



Aaarrghh! Stuck beneath the trees. That special punch shot option comes in handy for knocking a shot under the branches. (MS)

drawn and nicely animated, but the course itself is a little sparse, and the 3-D view takes an age to draw.

Sound effects are just as bad, the incidental music is awful, and the FX are about as realistic as one of our deadlines — the clapping effect when a ball is sunk sounds more like someone smashing a plate on a stone floor! However, there is some good speech synthesis and thankfully no background tune, which would've been about as welcome as a fart in a lift.

For all its faults, *World Class Leaderboard* is fun to play, especially with a friend, and is one of the few games computer-hating parents might enjoy. Tighter presentation and a faster running speed would have made it an essential purchase.

Small-screen golf

The GG game matches up to its big-screen counterpart very well.

Graphics are virtually identical, well defined and colourful. Sound is restricted to a title tune and some very good speech. Options remain the same and there are still four courses to choose from so the Master System ratings box applies to the Game Gear version. All the on-screen signals are there, including your chosen club, wind direction and distance to the hole.

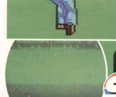
The game plays identically to the MS version with the single exception of speed: the courses are drawn slightly faster which definitely improves playability.

Predictably, there's no Game Gear-to-Game Gear option, but up to four players take it in turns to play at being Arnold Palmer. Has anyone seen my putter? **IAN**





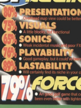
You too can be Nick Faldo, Sevvy or even Jimmy Tarbuck! Ho ho! And you don't even need to wear those polo-neck sweaters and baggy trousers!







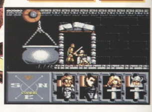
Check out the position of your balls on the useful map of the hole. Is that Bruce Forsyth's toupé I can see?







Reviewed!



Roleplaying meets arcade action in the first official Advanced Dungeons & Dragons conversion. ADRIAN PITT explores its chances of success.

Boo! Hiss! That nasty Queen Of Darkness has unleashed hordes of monsters to roam the land of Krynn. As well as dealing with these the Companions of the Lance (they aren't Heroes yet!) have to stop Queenie emerging from her dingy abyss by finding the Disks of Mishakal.

Golly gosh! There's so much to do, isn't there? Fortunately in this *AD&D* game, anything is possible! Just be prepared to face the consequences. It's a hard job taking control of a group of trusty fighters with individual characteristics. Some are experts at casting spells, others are skilled when it comes to using particular weapons.

The opening sequence is helpful, with nicely detailed shots of the heroes whose brief biographies give clues to their skills. They all have really nice-sounding names like Goldmoon and Riverwind, exotic or what? One of Goldmoon's hidden talents, for example, is that she can detect invisible objects.

First thing to do is select your lead character to control in the arcade window above the RPG menu. Characters can be switched to suit the current situation. On screen, all can walk/run left and right, most can jump and duck too. However, the heroes are slow-moving and I found control sluggish. Turning around is cumbersome, as is leaving an area — exits appear on screen, highlighted by a compass which flashes available routes.

Nasty minions can lurk round any corner. These are many and varied, including various winged beasties; the big, blue beggar is incredibly hard to shift. Even little old men with high hairlines take great pleasure in kicking your shins. Four-and-twenty bonks on their balding bonces should see them right!

The key to Heroes of the Lance is perseverence

A word of warning to warriors: keep a check on your current status! Called up via the menu, this shows your Strength, Intelligence, Wisdom, Constitution, Dexterity and Charisma. Every battle affects these scores and your hit points, all displayed by diminishing bars on screen. If a character loses all his hit points, a little gravestone appears where he once fought. An infuriating factor is how easy it is for several gang members to be killed off in a trice. A character killed in battle is swiftly substituted by another, and if you're not quick enough the replacement is slaughtered too!

If you're not up to combat, various spells can be selected from the easy-to-use menu including a Missile that zaps a baddie in one fell swoop, the Web and Detect Magic — great for finding hidden charms. If a member of your bunch holds a staff, more specialist spells are available such as Protection From Evil and Locate Hidden Traps.

Other menu options enable object manipulation with the usual Use, Take and Drop functions. Objects such as gems, scrolls and weapons are hidden in the chests dotted about. Certain artefacts can only be used by certain characters; that's where the Give option comes in handy.

You can also keep tabs on what monsters you've slain, and check on your party's experience — gained from successful combat and collected objects. With top-notch organisational skills you should be able to explore the hundreds of rooms and corridors without losing too many gang members. But it'll take a lot of skill and dexterity to find the Disks of Mishakal, hidden in the lair of the Dragon, Khisath. He's huge and black and enjoys nothing more than gobbling little warriors whole!

The key to *Heroes Of The Lance* is perseverance. It's a huge game with a lot of depth. *D&D* fans

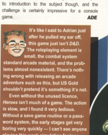


would have an advantage in getting into the game, but whether they'll like it is another matter. *D&D* is played in the imagination and a simulation approaching the depth of the real thing would probably have to be text-based. *Heroes* has all the trappings but not the essence of *D&D*. Realism is severely hampered by only one character appearing on screen at a time — having to pretend everyone else is standing to the person's right is silly. The arcade action is occasionally fun, with impressive graphics to admire, but you lose the *D&D* sense of actually *being* that character.

Another flaw is the lack of a save-feature. According to US Gold the game is massive, but once you've worked out a route and practised your attack method it can be completed in a single session. Fair enough, but it does lead to repetition, going over the same opening sequences and moves again and again.

Heroes is an interesting hybrid, but not particularly successful. It's got an arcade perspective, but there isn't much arcade action, just a lot of walking around. It's not a bad game, just a bit dull and disappointing. Newcomers to *D&D* might find it a simplistic introduction to the subject though, and the challenge is certainly impressive for a console game.

ADE



It's like I said to Adrian just after he pulled my ear off, this game just isn't *D&D*. The roleplaying element is small, the combat system standard arcade material, and the problems almost nonexistent. There's nothing wrong with releasing an arcade adventure such as this, but US Gold shouldn't pretend it's something it's not.

Even without the unused licence, *Heroes* isn't much of a game. The action is slow, and I found it very tedious. Without a save game routine or a password system, the early stages get very boring very quickly — I can't see anyone playing this weak simulation for long.

IAN



- PRODUCER: US GOLD
- GG: ?? • MD: ??
- MEMORY: 512K
- PLAYERS: 1
- PRICE: £32.99

SF Rating

76% PRESENTATION
- Nice opening sequence. Easy-to-use menues

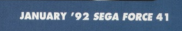
79% VISUALS
- Big, bold and colourful. Nice animation

64% SONICS
- Not outstanding. One main tune and small FX

63% PLAYABILITY
- A little slow, hard to get into at first

74% LASTABILITY
- Fans will persevere, though it's easy to give up

71% FORCE
- Not entirely successful in merging D&D with arcade-adventuring






SEGA FORCE
BUCK ROGERS
Countdown to Doomsday
ELECTRONIC ARTS
OLIVER FREY



PITT STOP INTERSTELLAR TIPS

Pitt's the name, ttips're the game!

Lost, are you? Well, this is the place to look. And if you can help others, send me your hints and tips so I can print them. That's it!

Shinobi

Chris Sinden's an expert Game Gear *Shinobi* player from **East Sussex**. Here's a step-by-step guide to defeating the bosses on each level. Take it away Chris!

THE HIGHWAY Be sure to get the Life Up and hearts on this level on top of the right building. Don't bother using magic on the helicopter. Here's his attack formation, use it to avoid and defeat him. He starts from the right, hovers, right, left, hovers, left, left, right, right, hovers, right, left. If you hit him every time, he's a dodo no sweat!

HARBOUR Use pink Shinobi for this level and get all the Power Up items etc by climbing on the roof of the steel girders.

Get the Life up to the left from the first entrance in the boat itself. Don't use magic on the huge gorilla robot unless you're really in trouble (reds if necessary). Use pink bombs to hit the yellow ninja on top. Use the spiked arms to get up to his height. If you time it right, you won't get hit. It'll take only four hits.

WOODLAND Use pink ninja to get past this level. You need to be fast to dodge the jumping ninjas in the trees and be careful of the men with the blades, they can kill you with a couple of hits.

Dodge the laser beams fired by the statues inside the temple. Use pink ninja to crawl across the temple ceilings. To kill the leader, wait for it to come over to you in the left corner. As it comes down, quickly move to the right a couple of steps and turn around. Face left and fire bombs at three ninjas.

Now go back into the corner again and wait. This time the leader comes down towards the centre of the screen. Hit it again and keep following the same technique till he's defeated.

VALLEY Use the yellow ninja — he walks on water. Get the life on one of the bottom platforms. Change into the green ninja half way and jump up to the top platform to get the chests.

When you're inside the cave, use the green ninja to get the enemy from a distance. Use red magic to destroy the walls of blocks to reveal shortcuts. Watch out for the spiked men who roll at you in the darker caverns.

As soon as you reach the end leader, make sure you're the green ninja. Quickly jump onto the top platform and duck, firing to the right. The ninja will be trapped and will die in seconds!

WONDERBOY III

Dudes with MS *Wonderboy III* should be forever grateful to **Calvin Holbrook** from the **Isle Of Wight**. He knows the lot! Here's his solution for bashing those dastardly dragons.

● **DRAGON 1: MUMMY** First get the key from a room by the sea located by leaving the village near the well. Enter the tower to the next level and head left to the pyramid. Jump over it and get the heart in the Sphinx. Now enter the pyramid and when at the top, use the key and keep walking left till you fall down the hole. To kill the dragon, stay left, jump and fire.

● **DRAGON 2: ZOMBIE** Head left from the village to reach the castle. Go in and trundle round the passages. Kill the zombie by going screen-left, jumping up and shooting at him!

● **DRAGON 3: PIRATE** To start, youneed the Thunder sabre, found on the same level as the pyramid, but to the right. When you reach the shop, buy the dragon-mail and wear it. When you reach a castle, the Sabre should appear. Return to the Paradise Section and break the four blocks in the sea. Continue till you get a life heart and reach the dragon. To kill it, let the hooks bounce over you and then hit him in the face!

● **DRAGON 4: SAMURAI** Go down the hole near the tower in the village and drop down the third shaft. There are lots of hidden shops on the way to the dragon, so keep your eyes peeled. You find the dragon in the Japanese temple. To massacre it, beware of his fireballs and hit him when his sword is up.

● **DRAGON 5: VAMPIRE** Turn into Hawkman and fly left of the tower and smash the blocks for a heart and a thunder. Then go through the door and use the Magical Sabre for the middle block and break it with the Legendary Sword.

Now go through the new door. Enter the castle and follow the route. Change into Mouseman and walk through the wall. When you're Lionman, change into Hawkman by falling down the hole. When you reach the dragon, kill it by using the Hades Armour.

■ If you don't want to go the long-winded way to each dragon, **Calvin**'s also sent in a cheat mode — sick spopilsport.

Type in: **WESTONEOOOOOOO** and apart from getting full armoury and loads of dosh, you can dash to the dragons mega-fast. Do the following to get to each fire breather…

■ **ZOMBIE DRAGON** Enter the tower and spring up to the next level. The hidden door is on the platform beneath the other door.

■ **PIRATE DRAGON** Enter the tower at the top and jump onto the platform on the left.

■ **SAMURAI DRAGON** Enter the door at the bottom of the tower, turn left and push up.

■ **MUMMY DRAGON** Go in the house underneath the shop. Go under the question mark block and push up.

■ **VAMPIRE DRAGON** Enter the tower and exit at the top. Jump on the first platform and press up.



SONIC the hedgehog

You lot certainly know your stuff when it comes to ousting the evil Dr Ivo Robotnik. Thanks to **Wilson Ross** from **Solihull** for these really triff tips.

● **GREEN HILL ZONE** Grab several rings and the sparkles box hidden in the third tree before the final lamp-post. Now run right to the end, where you see two floating platforms. Jump onto the far one and Dr Robotnik flies down. Jump into his ship eight times, before the sparkles wear off. If they do, dodge the ball and chain by waiting in one of the bottom corners.

● **MARBLE ZONE** Run past the lamp-post down the hill. Jump the lava onto a purple platform, then jump onto the further platform (also purple). Dr Robotnik appears from the right. Jump up and hit him. He then flies left and drops a bomb. Stand on the edge of the platform nearest the lava and attack him as he returns. Now jump left onto the other platform to avoid his fire bomb. Repeat eight times.

● **SPRING YARD ZONE** As you approach the end, you see a row of blocks: stand on the far left. Robotnik flies on from the right. Stay where you are till he tries to spike you. Move right and bounce on him. Stand on the next block from the left and wait for him to attack, then move right and attack him yourself. Do this eight times. Be careful not to fall through the gap.

● **LABYRINTH ZONE** A bit tricky this! You don't actually destroy Robotnik's ship, just get past his hazards. Make sure you get the shield first. Keep jumping up the platforms, avoiding the various fire balls and spikes. Keep moving at quite a pace, or the water catches you up and Sonic drowns.

● **STARLIGHT ZONE** You see three seesaw platforms. Robotnik flies on from the right-hand side and drops flashing balls on one end of the seesaws. Use this to propel Sonic into Robotnik, or better still, catapult the balls into him. Beware! The balls explode, spraying out bits of shrapnel if left too long.

● **FINAL ZONE** Run Sonic as far right as possible — the safest place from which to operate. Two pillars move out to crush you. Robotnik is in one, so attack it. Now move left a bit. As the two electric charges on the right-hand side are readying to move down, centralise yourself between them. As they move down, jump through and move to the right. Wait for Robotnik to move down again in one of the pillars and bop him! After hitting him eight times, the machine explodes. Now sit back and watch the final sequence.

● **THE SECRET ROOM** In the first act of the SPRINGYARD ZONE go to the first spring and curl up as you hit it. As you're being propelled high into the air, push left on the control pad. You *should* land on a platform which takes you up to a stash of rings, an extra life and a pair of speedy boots!

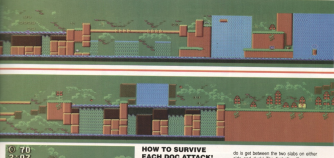
FAMOUS MD SONIC CHEAT

On the title screen, while Sonic is waggling his finger, push up, down, left, right and then hold A and press Start. You then go onto a superb level select screen. The game's so easy though that only wimps will need it, even the Ed's completed this one!

Thanks for these super Master System *Sonic* tips go to CRASH's **Nick 'Pie' Roberts**. Take it away, Nick...

● The best piece of advice I can give to all you *Sonic* addicts is practise. You soon get to know the layout of each level and the positions of each of the nasties you will encounter. Once you have made a few mistakes you will know not to follow the same route next time you play.

● The joy of *Sonic* is that there's so much to explore and discover. You can play through the entire game and only see half the landscapes and graphics, and of course collect half the extra life and power-





up icons. It's worth taking a few games to experiment and look around the levels. You'll find lots of hidden extras you didn't know were there!

● An obvious tip is to collect every single ring you can lay your paws on. You get an extra life for every 100 you collect so even if it seems a waste of time, DO IT!

● On the special stages there are always continue or life icons dotted around somewhere. Go for these first, collecting rings along the way, ensuring that you have enough time left to get to the exit. If you fail to reach the exit in time you will lose any icons collected.

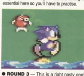
● On the Labyrinth and Sky Base rounds where you meet the nasty with spinning fireballs, use this little trick. As you move towards him turn your back: when he touches you, you'll fall backwards past him rather than away from him again!



HOW TO SURVIVE EACH DOC ATTACK!

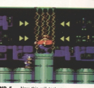
● **ROUND 1** — This is simple as you have to battle against Dr Robotnik on a nice piece of flat ground. He'll fly over your head three times then start to descend. As soon as he starts coming down, spin and hit him. If you're fast enough you can do this four times before he starts to fly away again. You only need to hit him eight times to defeat him on this occasion.

● **ROUND 2** — This is a little harder. You now have water to deal with as well. The Doc pops up either side of the small island and fires three laser bolts at you. The trick is to bounce on his bonce just as he is rising up, then get into the far corner. When the lasers come towards you, jump up so that they fall underneath you. Correct timing is essential here so you'll have to practise.



● **ROUND 3** — This is a right nasty one! You have a U-shaped vine to stand on and the Doc drops horrible spinning bombs on it that roll from side to side. You have to jump the bombs and bash the Doc at the same time, while dodging from side to side. Sounds difficult doesn't it? Well it is, but you soon get the hang of it.

● **ROUND 4** — Easy peasy! When the Doc comes up from below all you have to do is get between the two slabs on either side and duck! The fireballs will go over your head. Now he will attack from the top–left. Jump up to bash him then jump over the gap to the other side, and jump again to dodge the missile. The nasty blighter will now attack from top–right; do the same as before. Repeat this until you have bashed him eight times! Don't worry if Sonic jumps a little slow, you are underwater so it's like playing the game in slow motion.



● **ROUND 5** — Now this will test your skills to the full. There's a bolt of lightning that moves left to right across the screen, fireballs that fire from the top–right corner and you have to bounce against the screen on the right. The first couple of lightning passes are straightforward. When the bolt stops, run and bounce then get back to the left side of the screen quickly. When the fireball has passed and the lightning has stopped again, repeat the process. Things get a little trickier now. The lightning stops and starts a little faster so you have to judge for yourself when to go. After a few more bounces on the screen it will smash and you can chase the Doc.

● **ROUND 6** — By jumping onto the teleporter and following the Doc, Sonic will go into an animation sequence where he bashes the Doc's ship for the last time and completes the game!



POPULOUS

What an humungous game (bloomin' big, anyway)! So, if you're into size, here are oodles of tips to see you on your way.

■ Take time to study the World Description Screen, it supplies you with vital information in order to defeat your opponent. Information is Power and to defeat the Powers Of Evil you need all the help you can get.

■ The battle numbers range from 0 to 5,000, increasing in difficulty. There are some easier levels included to give you a bit of a rest.

■ The landscape type is a very important part of your strategy. Given a world of grassy plains, you should take the opportunity to spread your population widely. They can travel greater distances than in more severe conditions. In the Snow, Ice, Rock and Lava worlds your men tire quickly and should be encouraged to settle as soon as possible.

■ Evil's playing speed and rating also determine your playing style. If he's fast and his rating is high this won't necessarily be to his advantage. You can allow him to build up his strength quickly in one area and then cause a volcano to destroy all his work. Look for weaknesses in the way Evil plays.

■ The world number determines when you can raise or lower land. Maybe when one of your towns or people are on screen, or when the town is visible. In the latter case you must be very careful not to force a Walker out of a settlement, as he can find his own flat land before you can build him up again.

■ Swamps are useful, but beware if you swamp the enemy. Good Walkers could move into the swamp land and sink.

■ Consider the effects of a flood. If water is fatal then perhaps you should build all your settlements at a higher level.

■ For the most economical use of Manna you should aim to build your flat land one level higher than sea level. This will allow you to populate large areas very quickly. However, the danger of being flooded by Evil increases later in the game, so try to lead your men to higher ground.

Right, let's try one of the games. Select GENESIS and press button 1.

Hit the PAUSE button. This gives you a chance to find your way around the screen.

Top left shows the book of worlds, opened to the page showing the current world map. On it is a small white cross, indicating the current portion of the map. This is magnified in the lower part of the screen.

If you look on the world map you can see flashing dots, which are locations of men and settlements..

First concentrate on creating a strong leader. Locate the hand pointer over the View Papal Magnet or View Leader icon and press button 1. Repeat-pressing this allows you to view the various leaders.

Creating more flat land around your leader advances his technology. If you create enough, he will be in a castle. His strength increases quickly. If your leader is too close to the edge of the world, or to rocks, he won't have enough flat land to possess a castle.

Populate as much land as possible. By now, Walkers may be emerging from your towns. Encourage them to do so by bumping them out.

BUMPING WALKERS OUT

Go to one of your settlements by using the View Settlement icon. The objective now is to destroy flat land close to the settlement without actually destroying the town itself. Select a point close to a building, but not directly on it. Raise or lower this point and with less crop land the size of the town will diminish. If you decrease the size of a town enough, a Walker will leave. When he has gone far enough, you can restore the flat land and will once again have the original town. You will also have a Walker.

BUMPING OUT OF CASTLES

This is an effective technique. By Bumping Out of a castle you are, in effect, forcing the occupants out of a whole castle into a small building. A large part of the population is forced to leave and when they settle, the chances are still too many people will be living in a single settlement. They again will be bumped out. In this way a castle can spawn a whole string of small towns.



ADVANCED BUMPING OUT

As you create more flat land you will find castles springing up close together. Take advantage of this to spread your people further. Follow Walkers to help them settle or face them to keep moving.

Walkers can be forced to move to new territory by using the Influence Behaviour icons. The only way to directly control your Walkers' movements is to have the Papal Magnet, which can be placed anywhere if you have a leader. The Influence Behaviour icon will either cause your Walkers to join another Good Walker, or to go and fight.

WORKING STRATEGY FOR GENESIS.

OPENING GAME

Nurture your Initial Population.

1. Make all your Walkers settle.
2. Bump the Good Leader from the edge of the world and settle him in a castle by destroying rocks and making flat land.
3. Place Good Papal Magnet on the Good Leader's house.
4. Place the shield on the Good Leader; you will know if he becomes a Walker or is attacked.
5. Check for new Walkers to settle, otherwise develop all your towns into castles.

MID GAME

Build your strength.

In general do not Bump Out your leader. Leave him in his castle to increase his strength. You may need to move him to populate new areas.

1. Whenever you have enough Manna to cause a catastrophe, go to Evil's biggest centre of population (castles) and carry out the most severe catastrophe you can.



Concentrate your catastrophes on the Evil Leader.

2. If you have Walkers, settle them in castles.
3. If you have no Walkers, Bump some out of the castles.
4. If your territory becomes overpopulated and you have a Strong Leader, move the Papal Magnet to an area you wish to develop. Select the Go To Papal Magnet Influence Behaviour icon, Bump Out the Good Leader. Follow him, being careful that he doesn't become too weak. When he reaches the open space, select the Settle Influence Behaviour icon and build flat land for him.

4a. When the Good Leader is settled, you can build him a castle and then re-select the Go Papal Magnet icon. Then Bump Out other Walkers. When they come close to the Leader re-select the Settle icon.

4b. With a few new castles you can then continue Bumping Out in your new territory.

LATE GAME

Build a strong Leader.

1. When the population is high, place the Good Papal Magnet on the Evil Leader, or in his biggest centre of population. Ensure the Good Leader is in a castle and select the Go To Papal Magnet icon.

1a. Bump Out Walkers from other settlements, ensuring that their houses remain. They will go to join the Good Leader. Follow them in case they become instructed by water.

1b. The shield will show you when your Leader becomes a Walker; he is now very strong and you are ready for war.

END GAME

Going to War.

1. When your Good Leader is strong, place Papal Magnet on an Evil house and select Go To Leader, Go To Papal Magnet.

Your Walkers will move into the enemy camp. When the Good Leader arrives and the Good Walkers are approaching, select Go To Fight.

1. When you feel that there are other Evil settlements which require your Walkers' attention, again place the Papal Magnet on a new Evil settlement.
2. If your leader is weak, you need to bring him back into your camp and build up his strength. Place the Papal Magnet on a new evil settlement.
3. If the Evil Leader is too strong, try to Swamp him. In this way you will destroy a lot of the Evil population.
4. Using the Papal Magnet, Go To Magnet and Go To Fight, attack the settlements, not the Walkers. Walkers are continually growing weaker, while settlements are increasing in strength. To attack Walkers, use Swamp or, if possible, lower the ground around them.

In this final stage of the Genesis level, you become directly involved leading your men to the specific settlements they are to attack. If you have enough Manna, a knight will do much of the legwork for you.

■ **SUPER MONACO (MD)**

To go faster, if you stay behind another driver's car you can pick up the car's slipstream and beef up your speed. Also, the less you skid the more points you get.

■ **ALTERED BEAST (MD)**

In round 1, to defeat the boss faster, pick up only two of the power up balls and you'll find it's quicker than with three.

■ **CHOPLIFTER (MS)**

On the third round, fly into the cave backwards — it's harder to be killed. To get to any level, press up, down, left, hold onto right, press button 2.

James Smith,
Eastlothian

■ **GREAT VOLLEYBALL (MS)**

If you're having trouble deciding which team to be, here's a list of all them all, starting with the best, down to the worst: USSR, France, USA, Brazil, Cuba, Japan, China, Korea.

■ **VIGILANTE (MS)**

To select a level, push the joypad to the top-left position and push buttons 1 and 2 all at the same time. Use the joypad to select the level you want to start at.

Steven Fewell, Kent

■ **Here's the secret of how to practise each and every level in *Shadow Dancer*: Press A, B, C and Start to access a cheat mode.**

Jacob Kennedy,
London

SPIDER-MAN

Spider-Man! Spider-Man! One of my fave cartoon heroes. **David Leather** from **Lancashire** has sent in these mean Spidey tips.

WAREHOUSE *Forklift*: Jump over it when you're in front of it and shoot the driver. Repeat this over and over.

Doc Octopus: Crawl up to him and use your shield. Stand up and punch several times. When your shield wears, replace it.

SEWERS *Lizard*: Don't go all the way on the left as venom appears also. Stick on the wall and when the walking handbag is a fair distance off, drop and duck. He also ducks. Stand and shoot three shots and duck. When you shoot him, he retreats. Keep repeating.

POWER STATION *Electro*: Stand between the girders or he sends a couple of 1000 volts through you! As he shoots the girder, duck, shoot, then jump up and duck. Shoot again and sometimes you'll get him in a lock. Repeat this several times.

CENTRAL PARK *Ape*: Duck as he punches, because he won't punch low. If he jumps, crawl to the side from which he jumped. Stand and shoot as he walks away.

Sandman: As soon as he appears, swing along as fast as you can to the left and find the fire hydrant. Shoot or kick the hydrant on its right side and wash Sandy away!

CITY *Mad Biker*: Jump over her and shoot one shot. Jump, as you'll have to avoid being run over.

Hobgoblin: Avoid the pumpkins if you can and shoot towards the side. He's on an upward angle as he falls, so shoot across, as it's possible to get him in a lock.

Venom: Restore your energy. He jumps great distances. Retreat a while and shoot him once, then swing away. Just keep repeating this.

SECRET CAVERN *Cannon*: Shoot a web on its front and walk near it.

Walker Robot: Do a flying kick on the lens on top.

ENEMY BASE *Electro, Lizard, Hobgoblin, Venom*: If you defeat all these, stick the keys in the bomb in the order of colours shown on it. If you succeed, it's time to defeat Kingpin.

SHADOW DANCER

Fancy a game of *Shadow Dancer*? Well, pop it into your trusty Master System and let **Jacob Kennedy** from **London** do the talking!

STAGE 1-1 When the first green disc-thrower and the gunman beyond him are dead, stand on the brick in between and

CASTLE OF ILLUSION

GAME GEAR 99

Chris Sinden must be a Mickey Mouse fan. He's played Castle Of Illusion on the Game Gear to death! To get you going, here are the first three levels — final lot next issue. Are you sitting comfortably?...

THE WOODLAND Walk right, picking up blocks for defence. Get the contents of the chests along the way and continue going right, till you come to the far wall. Here are two secret chests in mid air. Go back to the second ladder and down into the cavern.

Get the chest to the left and walk right. Get these chests and go down to the next room. Go right to the wall and uncover a chest in mid air. Don't destroy it yet! Use it as a platform to jump the wall. Now get the goodies, including one secret chest on the step and go back to get the chest you used as a platform. Go back to the woodland and go left to the first ladder. Go down and jump the gaps to the left. Get the chest and pick up the barrel to get over the wall. Get the chests and destroy the blocks on the floor. Fall down the hole into the next room. Go left and dodge the falling rocks. Now get the chests. Go down the ladder to get two secret chests in mid air to the left.

Now move right and past the caterpillar on the moving leaf. Work your way across the moving platforms and the trees. Pick up the apple at the second tree for the next caterpillar. Timing and balance are essential to get across to the end leader.

To beat the tree trunk, simply jump over him when he spins and bounce on his head just before he releases his leaves. He only takes four hits to beat.

TOYLAND Go left through the moving platforms (make sure you duck on the second one), pick up the marble and throw it at the clown on the controller on the platform. This knocks out both planes. Go up the ladder on the right. Grab the marble and disable the plane with it. Quickly bounce on the controller. Continue up the ladder to the next screen.

Collect the star and drop off the screen on the left-hand side. Keep guiding yourself to the left and you land on a platform with a chest. Get this and go back to the clown on the bottom. Kill him and pick up the barrel. Throw this near the train and use it to jump on the cloud.

Go up the ladder and kill the chess piece. Put the barrel on the switch to open the door. Go up the ladder, dodge the bubbles and move barrel to the wall to the right. Go over and get the chest.

Kill the chess piece and kill the two clowns on the way. Drop down and get the chests, including one secret one on the step. Now go down the slope on the left and jump on the higher platform. There should be a chest. Get this and walk left to a secret passage to the next room.

Get the key and drop down. Get the chest and the door. The end leader is fast and fairly unpredictable, so be quick to get him as soon as he pops out of his box. Watch out for the marbles he throws. It will take four hits to kill him.

CAKELAND Make sure you keep moving, otherwise the screen catches up with you. Go right across the platforms, get all the chests, and make sure you bounce on all the sweet platforms. Once you get to the main block, quickly pick up the chests and cakes and throw them quickly to make your way through the small passage. Get the chest and duck on the platform below the one you're on.

Keep going till you come to a slope. Go down and jump off the falling platform to the right. Get the chest in mid air and get on the top platform. Grab all the goodies. Now follow the bottom route and dodge the doughnut. Jump the gap and throw cakes at the wall. Wait for the doughnut to go, jump up and follow it.

Drop into the icing and quickly jump onto the platform on the right. Get chest in mid air and go left across the platforms, avoiding dolphins. On the next choccy block, there's another chest. Get the chest at the far end and go down the ladder. Fall from the ceiling and go down the ladder on the far right.

Avoid the rolling doughnut and drop onto the platform with the barrel on it. Kill the chocolate drop and use the barrel to get onto the ladder above. Get all the chests (one in mid air and one in the centre of the room). Now go back down. Go left along the passage. Jump the gap and avoid the doughnut. Get the chests and go down the ladder to find the end leader.

To beat the chocolate bar you have to pick up the block that falls when he hits the screen. Pick this up and quickly run behind him. he will now move to the other side. As soon as he hits the wall and another block falls, throw the block you have in his face! Pick up the one on the floor and throw it at him as soon as he hits the wall again. Repeat this and he dies in seconds. Four to five hits are needed for this leader.

shoot. You get an extra life.

STAGE 1-2 Go beyond the first earthquake and above the disc-thrower. Once on the ledge, a baddie rolls out, but stay where you are, shoot him and gain another life.

STAGE 1-3 Shoot the baddie in the head and he jumps up and causes six blocks to fall towards you. Dodge these as quickly as possible. If you can't, then use your magic to make the rocks vanish. When the baddie breathes fire, duck it. Don't try to jump.

BONUS LEVEL On the first few bonus levels, stay on the left-hand side and keep firing (not too fast). You should then hit all the ninjas and three lives are yours.

STAGE 2-1 Near the end of the level, jump onto the ledge with the two gunmen and kill them. Then collect the 2-up reward.

STAGE 2-2 At the trailer, jump on to the second box, jump and shoot right and then collect the symbol.

STAGE 2-3 When the baddie's head appears, shoot him. Beware though, 'cos his hands come out of the wall to hit you. Dodge this quickly as possible. If this is impossible, use your magic before.

BONUS LEVEL Follow instructions for previous Bonus Level.

STAGE 3-1 Walk to the end of the third platform and shoot the baddie who rolls out. Continue to shoot till the symbol appears. Leave it and go back, then jump up to the higher level. Walk right until you find yourself at the end above the symbol. Jump down to collect it and you gain a 2-up.

STAGE 3-2 No extra lives to be gained.

STAGE 3-3 When the baddie is about to throw the circle saws, quickly jump up and shoot at her head. If you are hit by one of the saws, quickly use your magic.

BONUS LEVEL As before.

STAGE 4-1 When you arrive at the gaping holes, jump over the first one, then turn to face left. Now shoot to reveal an extra life. Watch out! Don't bother getting it; it's a trap!

STAGE 4-2 After killing the second green disc-thrower, continue till you reach the place where bullets fly out of the darkness. Kill the two gunmen and jump over the brick. Face left and shoot the brick to get the 1-up.

STAGE 4-3 Wait for the baddie to stop spinning and shoot the wolf heads. The baddie now goes through one of them and dies. If he shoots at you, turn in the opposite direction and jump the fireballs. If you can't do this, use your magic.

BONUS LEVEL As before.

STAGE 5-1 In room 2, between the 10th and 12th boxes, jump down and shoot left while crouching to get a 1-up. In room 3, behind the box where the hostage is hiding, again shoot left while crouching to reveal another 1-up. In room 5, shoot the jewel.

FINAL STAGE When the ninjas appear on top of the pillars, shoot them (three times each). When there are too many of them for you to handle, use your magic. When the man sitting in the chair raises his head to the top of the screen, quickly move under a pillar to avoid the fireballs. After they disappear, jump up and shoot the flashing spot where his head was.

■ **GHOULS 'N' GHOSTS**

If you're having probs, *Mark Betts* from *Norfolk* could be just the man to help with these cheats.

On the title screen, if you press the 'A' button four times, then Up, Down, Left and Right you'll hear a chime. Now it's possible to do some of the following or combine them:

B and Start (at the same time): *Invincibility.*
Up, A, Start: *Go to Level 2.*
Down, A, Start: *Go to Level 3.*
Left, A, Start: *Go to Level 4.*
Right, A, Start: *Go to Level 5.*
Right, Down, A, Start: *Go to End Boss.*

Mark Betts, Norfolk

Ahoy, me hearties! Ha ha Jim lad! Anchors away! As the PITT TTIPS ship sails slowly into the sunset, I must say I've enjoyed, nay, thoroughly relished my first time at the helm.

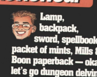
I hate long, tearful goodbyes. But fret not, as a certain Terminator once said not so long ago: 'I'll be back'!

Thanks for the tons of tips you've sent in. Don't stop now, keep piling 'em in. There's a £50 Sega Voucher up for grabs next time for the TIP OF THE MONTH so get crackin'! Send all your tips, cheats and maps to: Europress Impact, PITT TTIPS, SEGA FORCE, Case Mills, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1JW.

Until next month, remember, early to bed, early to rise and you'll catch Mad Lizzie on TV-am. See ya!



Reviewed!



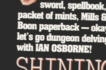
Lamp, backpack, sword, spellbook, packet of mints, Mills & Boon paperback — okay, let's go dungeon delving with IAN OSBORNE!

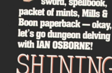






SHINING IN THE DARKNESS





Shining In The Darkness boasts some of the finest, most detailed graphics yet seen on the Mega Drive. Characters are large and full-figured; no two are alike and they're all beautifully drawn.

Unfortunately, *Shining*'s storyline is less than inventive. You have to rescue a princess then destroy the head villain, who's seeking to usurp the kingdom of Thornwood.

But there's a minor twist: your father, Thornwood's finest knight, was with the princess when she vanished. While rescuing the princess is important, you're more concerned about your father's welfare.

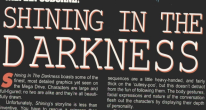
Combat with enemies isn't always a hack-and-slash affair; different enemies are vulnerable to different modes of attack, and you must learn what to use against who. Many require a little magical finesse, else they give a great deal of trouble, and spells which destroy some adversaries may have no effect on another.

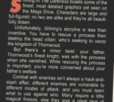
Damage reports are concise and clear; you always know the status of all three party members. Combat can be on the lengthy side, so some people are sure to grumble.

The best?

Most of the monsters aren't well animated: they either wiggle when attacking or move jerkily. Some of the dialogue and the animated sequences are a little heavy-handed, and fairly thick on the 'cutesy-poo', but this doesn't detract from the fun of following them. The body gestures, facial expressions and nature of the conversation flesh out the characters by displaying their depth of personality.

Shining In The Darkness is the most colourful, enchanting RPG I've played on the Mega Drive — I enjoyed it even more than *Phantasy Star II* and *III*. If you like RPGs, you *must* buy this game.





KEY

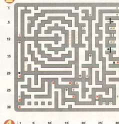
- Entrance from Lower Labyrinth
- Chests
- Exterior Walkway
- Floor Carousel (spins 270°)
- Sentinel/Guardian
- Cell Bars
- Slime (-1 MP/step)
- One-way Door
- Pool
- Overhead Pit
- Stairs Up/Down
- Pit
- Trap
- Golden Pool
- Grimwall
- Sprite Pool
- L LightHelm
- S LightShield
- B LightBlade
- A LightArmour
- J Jessica

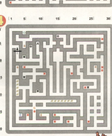
1 Labyrinth

2 Labyrinth Proper — Level 3

3 Labyrinth Proper — Level 4

4 Labyrinth Proper — Level 5





Shining Hints

I don't know how I do it. Sometimes I even amaze myself. Here, for your delectation, are answers to typical questions a Shining beginner might ask:

1 What's the mirror for?
The mirror is USED to bounce enemy spells away. After limited use it will need to be FIXED (like rings) by Arab.

2 What's the deal with the knight made of stone on the first level?
Forget the knight statue on Level One. This is just a prelude to many more who come alive on the later levels of the tower. This one does nothing.

3 What the hell are those square door-type structures scattered on the floor of different levels?
Those 'square doors' are fountains. Ignore ALL the blue ones. Much later you'll find the gold water ones. These are neat.

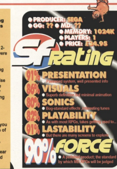
4 I've met a wall that grew arms and attacked me!?!
When you kill the wall it opens another area.

5 I've got my characters up around Level 20. I've seen screenshots from Japanese magazines showing characters up to Level 90! Will this game take years to finish?
You can finish the game with characters at Level 30. On the fourth and fifth level of the tower, each monster encountered can yield 2-5000 experience points, so my characters were jumping levels like popcorn.

6 Any general help?
Level is not so important, getting and making the right armour and weapons is. SEARCH VERY CAREFULLY. Luckily, there are no false walls to confuse you. The closest things are the living walls (see hint five) in Levels Four and Five but each is obvious — a shimmering centre gives them away.

AND FINALLY
The various things given to you (medallion, vial of tears etc) are determined by how far you are in the dungeon and or how many pieces of light armour you've collected.

Dai can be found in the Cave of Wisdom, down around 7E,29S, in the area where the cave loops around. He doesn't seem to appear the first time (at least, he didn't for me); I had to wander around the area a few times.



Buying a Sega couldn't be simpler, they're all over the place now. But what's really inside those sexy black casings, and what about Japanese imports, the mysterious 'greys'?

SF'S COMPLETE SEGA G

MEGA DRIVE

£129.99 with *Sonic The Hedgehog* and *Altered Beast*. Plus powerpack and single joypad.

The first full-blown 16-bit console has achieved astonishing success since its launch in 1989 and is unlikely to be seriously threatened in Europe for quite some time. The Mega Drive is a generation on from the MS which means prettier pictures, more musical *stereo* sonics, and greater speed. So much so the MD can handle coin-op conversions which often look and sound amazingly close to the original game. Such powerplay needs memory to exploit, with carts typically 512K and hence costing more than MS ones. 1,024K (8-megabit) carts aren't unknown though, and Ballistic have made a 12-megabit cart (1,536K). One further improvement is the MD supports three buttons rather than two on the joypads.

The MD can also be turned into a MS via a **Powerbase converter (£29.99)** which means upgrading MS owners can still play old games at a very reasonable price (although it's probably cheaper to keep your old MS!).

At the current price the Mega Drive is incredible value, the only minor whinge is that a second joypad isn't included for two-player games. £14.99 for one of those, or maybe you'd like something a bit more flashy — check out SF next month for the full low-down on sticks 'n' things for your Sega.

POWERPLAY: The CPU here is a nifty Motorola 68000, again supported by custom chips and a Zilog Z80 used by the Power Base. The graphics chip offers a screen resolution of 320 x 240 pixels plus up to 64 sprites. A rich palette of 512 colours offers up to 64 on screen at one time. Sound is offered in superb stereo, but only through the headphone socket which has a volume control.

OVERSEAS VARIANTS: The American machine is called the Genesis and is unavailable on import because the different US TV system makes adapting for the UK difficult. In short, avoid!

The original Japanese Mega Drive with deep red trim is typically imported in two versions, PAL and SCART. The basic machine has a cart lock to ensure only Japanese carts run, but this is usually disabled, allowing UK carts and most American games (see below) to run as well. Another good modification is switching them over internally to access English text rather than Japanese. However, such modifications invalidate Sega's guarantee. Importers can offer their own warranties, but that means it's important to get a trustworthy company with a good history. It's also worth bearing in mind Sega are currently attempting to crack down on hardware imports, taking companies involved to court!

Another complication is speed. The basic Japanese and American machines run at 60Hz and use only SCART to plug into TVs. UK machines need to be slowed down to 50Hz to operate with PAL TVs and are consequently slightly slower and will not operate with SCART monitors! If you want a UK machine to work with SCART you need a warranty-invalidating conversion, as offered by KC Games for £25. This installs a switch allowing you to choose whether your machine runs at 50 or 60Hz. This can also be useful with Japanese/US carts such as *Speedball 2* which won't work with 50Hz machines!

OVERSEAS SOFTWARE: Japanese carts are slightly bigger than their UK counterparts and won't fit without warranty-invalidating hacksawing at the machine's slot. Alternatively plug-in adaptors can be bought for £15 or so. Many carts have both English and Japanese language text; if you're machine is British or correctly modified it'll automatically display English. However, not all carts have full English text and text-heavy games like RPGs never do.

US carts are the same size as UK ones, but don't always work with 50Hz machines. It's also worth bearing in mind games are often modified for the European market so although import versions can be available sooner, they might not be as good as the official versions.

MASTER S

£59.99 with *Alex Kidd*, one joypad and powerpack. £89.99 with two games, light gun, joypad and powerpack.

The Master System II is essentially a marketing exercise, shrinking the basic Master System and eliminating a reset switch plus high-quality monitor outputs to reduce the price. One other compensation is that *Alex Kidd* is built into the machine! Otherwise the two machines are identical and there are no compatibility problems or, for that matter, technical enhancements with the new Master System.

The original MS was launched in Japan way back in 1983, but despite not being launched in the UK until 1987, has gone on to become a massive success here. Software houses such as US Gold are increasingly concentrating on consoles only, sinking lots of cash into game development because MS carts sell so well. Although the MD is the rising star, the MS still has plenty of life left in it yet and MS games can offer superior gameplay to prettier MD ones.

POWERPLAY: A now outdated Zilog Z80 CPU is supported by some clever custom chips. The graphics chip produces a maximum screen image of 256 x 192 pixels with up to four sprites on a single one of those 256 horizontal pixel lines. A maximum of 16 colours can be on screen, chosen from a palette of 128. Sound is mono, with a limited three channels or 'voices'.

The standard MS cart is 256K (2 megabits), but some games can be 512K and even include a battery for 'saving' your latest game position.

OVERSEAS VARIANTS: The MS is the same the world over, but US machines won't work here without conversion to differing power and TV standards.

OVERSEAS SOFTWARE: No problems.

UIDE TO EAR

STEM II



MEGA-CD

£TBA. Available Mid '92.



Undoubtedly the most exciting piece of kit in gaming, CD-ROM is, essentially, a disk drive. Information is stored not on instant access chips, as on a cart, but on a Compact Disc. This should mean slight pauses as new data is pulled off the disc. However, to minimise delays, Sega have built in a 6-megabit buffer (the size of some complete games!). A CD, though, can store approximately 676,000K. Every MS and MD game yet written could be stored on a single disc! What's more, CDs are relatively cheap to produce, unlike carts.

Mega-CD offers more than rapid access to loadsa code though. For one thing it can used to play standard music CDs. Software houses can record samples to be played during the game using this system or alternatively exploit new chips providing the MD with arcade-quality eight-channel PCM sound. The sonic possibilities are obviously immense.

And graphics? All that memory space means the sky's the limit for some stunning static pictures, but the clever bit is in yet another new chip; an extra central processor unit running faster than the MD's will really turbocharge game speed. Graphics can be scaled and rotated at stunning speed with rumours suggesting genuinely arcade-perfect conversions of games such as *Rad Racer*.

Combining enhanced graphics and sound with massive memory storage makes for the ultimate home entertainment system.

POWERPLAY: A Motorola MC 68000 CPU running at 12.5MHz, plus 6-megabit memory buffer, eight-channel PCM sound chip, 128Kbit CD-ROM and 64Kbit miscellaneous. The operating system is on a 1-megabit ROM chip.

OVERSEAS: Due out any day now in Japan, so importers should have it soon. But what about UK compatibility? Will importers be able to switch Japanese machines to produce English text? Will it work with UK machines? Die-hard gamers will find it hard to resist, but for others price and complexity means buying 'grey' import versions could well be a nightmare.

GAME GEAR

£99 (With no game or other extras.)



This remarkable piece of technology is essentially your standard Master System crammed into a compact, if not quite pocketable box blessed with a goodish LCD screen (6.5 cm x 5 cm). As such it's a shame there's no socket for a TV, but some sacrifices obviously had to be made and Gear carts are limited to a 256K maximum, physically a lot smaller than MS ones and slotting snugly into the back of the machine. Generally the only gameplay difference between MS carts and GG conversions is some rewriting to make text, scores and suchlike big enough to be readable on the small screen. If your eyesight is particularly good, however, you can buy a **Master Gear adaptor (£34.99)** which allows you to plug in standard MS carts. This means the Gear is more bulky, but it's good fun if you've got a big catalogue of MS games you might want to take on holiday.

Obviously conventional two-player games are non-starters on the Gear with its single joypad, but a **Link cable** can be bought to connect two Gears for specially written carts, which you obviously need two of. Since each player has his own screen, two-player games can be a lot more interesting and flexible than standard MS games where there's a shared screen. So far this option hasn't been fully exploited but, as the Atari Lynx demonstrates, linking-up can make for terrific gameplay impossible on conventional consoles!

One unique feature of the Gear is its ability to turn into a TV with the addition of a **TV Tuner (£TBA)**.

On the move the Gear operates off six Walkman-size batteries which it can drain flat in just three hours! If you're always on the move rechargeable batteries are a good idea, otherwise you can plug in a standard MS/MD powerpack for gaming at home.

POWERPLAY: Unsurprisingly the GG has the same tech specs as the MS.

DIMENSIONS: 20.5 x 11.5 x 3.5 cm.

OVERSEAS VARIANTS: American, Japanese and European GGs are all slightly different.

OVERSEAS SOFTWARE: Some US/Japanese software works, some doesn't. There's no easy way of telling!

JARGON DETOX!

CPU: Central Processing Unit, the chip at the heart of the machine, setting its processing speed usually measured in Hertz. The faster the machine the better, but custom chips supporting the CPU over graphics and sonics can make its speed less important.

K: Kilobytes, a measure of memory with a single kilobyte made up of 1,024 bytes, with each byte made up of 8 bits. A bit is the smallest piece of information in a computer or console, either on or off. Basically the more K, bytes and bits, the better.

Megathingies: A measure of the amount of memory on a cart, presumably jampacked with game-code. On computers one 'Meg' typically means one megabyte (1024K). On consoles 'Meg' usually refers to megabits (128K). So if you see a game advertised as being '8 Meg' it'll have 1024K or one megabyte of memory filled with game code.

NTSC: US TV standard, incompatible with UK PAL.

PAL: Not as chummy as it seems. It's the UK TV standard and is incompatible with Japanese and American TV systems. So if you try and plug an unmodified overseas machine into your TV it's not going to work!

Pixel: Picture element, the dots which make up the game screen.

SCART: Oblong sockets on the back of TVs and videos which allow input of a signal bypassing various filters, allowing a sharper, clearer image.

Sprite: A graphic image, usually fairly small, which can be moved across the screen without corrupting the background picture. Sprites are used for things like bullets, and are combined to make bigger images such as soldiers, tanks and so on.

NEXT MONTH

A round-up of Sega add-on gizmos such as joysticks and screen magnifiers!



Reviewed!

Wot! No water? And here's ADRIAN PITT all dolled up in flippers and snorkel! Cod knows, Ade, but at least it's dry on the platforms.





Herbie goes bananas in the choo-choo tunnel! Not really, it's James up to his hero-type thrills and spills in his Noddy car.



RoboCod is James's second Mega Drive adventure and like a film, the sequel usually has to be bigger and better if it's to succeed.

The graphics are great, for a start, vastly improved over the original. Any game that manages to raise a smile and the odd chortle gets the thumbs up from me straight away. I hate to have to use the word cute, but they are! They're amusing, incredibly colourful, well shaded, beautifully animated and generally just a pleasure to look at. Mr Cod himself oozes animation, I love the way he wiggles in time to the music and he looks rather dashing in his metallic clobber, complete with codpiece, no doubt?!!

Stunning graphics, incredible sound and a formidable challenge

Occasionally they're a little gaudy though, and the plot could also do with a touch of subtlety. The site of Mr Pond's investigations is nothing less than Santa Claus's castle, where the evil Dr Maybe has taken up residence with the aim of spoiling everyone's Xmas. the toys are all despondent, Rudolph's sobbing his heart out... it's enough to make you vomit!

Rubbernecking

So call in the UIA (Underwater Intelligence Agency, ho ho) and Pond, freshly outfitted with a suit of iron so he can breathe above water. Unfortunately he hasn't been blessed with an overwhelming amount of animation. Compared with Sonic or Donald Duck, Pond is a cold fish simply waggling his tail fins and rolling his eyes.

His one major improvement is that he can now extend his neck upwards over several screens, a rather strange effect which again doesn't stretch the MD to new graphical limits. The flexi-neck allows Pond to collect otherwise unreachable objects and, using his flippers, he can grab hold of things and pull the rest of his body up.

Later on in the game there's a brum brum car, a choo choo train and a handy little plane to help him on his travels. Again animation is lacking, but the graphics are so packed with colour and detail it doesn't really matter.

James's quest to save Xmas takes him ever further into Santa's claws. There are several rooms to enter straight away, but most are locked until earlier ones have been completed. Each door James enters contains three different sections to complete, usually by collecting a plethora of poignant penguins, after which the exit begins to flash.

Gameplay is generally straightforward, a case of jumping around to your heart's content, collecting objects such as fried eggs, vacuum cleaners (!!), strawberries, Christmas puds and the like, while avoiding a string of beasties including snakes, bats, rampant teddy bears and Bertie Bassett lookalikes! James can be hit three times by these mutants, (since when has Bertie Bassett been a mutant? —Ed) before eventually losing one of his precious lives.

Each level — and there are over ten — is more of a graphical extravaganza than the last.

JAM[...]
CODENA[...]

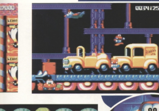
The backdrops add a real feel to the game. From liquorice allsorts to tennis balls, chocolate bars to soap bubbles!

You've heard of end-of-level beasties. Well, now meet the end-of-level 'cuties' who are really beasties in disguise! Ever tried scrapping with a cuddly teddy bear? He's *so* adorable you could munch him, rather than do 'im over! And this one's got spikes on his bum!

A mention now about the sound, created by the world-famous Mr Robert Hubbard. It's sort of — WOW! The title tune is a jolly Mickey-take of the *RoboCop* theme, then throughout we're treated to a cornucopia of musical ditties. Rob has certainly gone overboard on the humour theme; make sure you've got your toe-tapping shoes on!

Fin-tastic Fun

OK, fish fans, I've raved about the stunning graphics, praised the incredible sound, but what about the gameplay? Well *RoboCod* is definitely easy to get into; you don't have to have played









"Here in my car, I feel safest of all". Not with all these fish munching Datsuns! Watchit Jimmy! (Top)

Wot a massive teddy! No, it's not Pudsy Bear off Children In Need but a horrible one called Martin do him over! (Above)

ES POND II
AME: ROBOCOD

the original to understand what's going on. But after playing for a while things get a weeny bit annoying.

It's sometimes hard to know what James can actually cling onto and clamber across. Also there were times when I was shuffling across the screen with not that much to do, and it's fairly easy to lose all sense of direction and spend ages trying to find the way out of sections. But, as they say, practice makes perfect, and it's a welcome bonus that James isn't killed outright when first coming into contact with the enemy and there *are* continues thrown in, so longer games are par for the course.

The gripes are minor, *James Pond II* certainly has that something special over many Mega Drive games around at the moment. Not quite a Sonic beater, but a welcome addition to the MD collection of classic platform games.

ADE

RoboCod is a big, playable monster of a game with lots of spectacular backdrops, gorgeous end-level baddies and some gameplay variety — the ride on top of an express train, flying in an airplane; there's a lot to see and do. Platform fans will love it, but the graphics could've been done better — the toy theme serves as a weak excuse for plastering graphics over the backdrops like surreal wallpaper; there's no sense of a real world. *Quack Tales* is a lot more involving with more thoughtful gameplay as well. Where *RoboCod* does earn its fishfood is challenge, it's a big game and with just two continue-plays poses a formidable challenge. Not quite perfect, but a hit nonetheless. **STU**



Reviewed!

Despite the specs STUART WYNNE's no cissy — he plays new-improved butch Speedball, rougher, tougher, bloodier. Does he care? Hell no!

The original *Speedball* was a massive hit, an anything-goes mix of football and ice hockey played on a claustrophobic pitch where ricochets off the walls were critical. The sequel greatly expands the blue-steel pitch, chucks in loadsa new features and increases the violence quotient by awarding points for disabling opposing players.

Speedball 2 's a fast game; a match lasts three minutes, split into 90-second halves. Almost all matches consist of home and away legs although unlike the original the pitches are identical. Your team comprises nine men with you always controlling the player nearest the ball, including your goalie if the defence fails.

When not in possession, press fire to jump for an airborne ball, or make a sliding tackle if another player's hogging it — or not! Whether your tackle's successful depends on the attack/defence attributes of the two players. If energy falls to zero the player is stretchered off and a sub sent on, earning the team responsible bonus points!

Once you have the ball you can run with it, or throw it in eight directions at varying heights (depending on how long you hold down fire). You can even swerve the throw to the left or right by moving the joystick after the ball's been thrown.

Superb — should see Mega Drivers hip-deep in blood

Way to score

Unlike the original game it's not simply a case of scoring goals — points can be gained variously. Besides sending a player off injured (ten points), earn points by scoring a goal (ten points), hitting a bounce dome (two points), stars on the walls (two points per star turned on — hit all five for a ten-point bonus, or hit activated enemy stars to turn them off and subtract two points). There's also a Score Multiplier, activated by throwing a ball up its spiral ramp — hit it twice to double any subsequent scoring until deactivated or, worse still, reversed by your opponent.

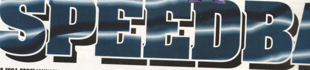
Other special features include two Electrobounces (electrifying the ball so it tackles the next player it hits) and four Warp Gates which zap the ball between them. Various tokens pop up onscreen, collected for a wide variety of effects including freezing opposing players, reversing opponent's joystick, automatically gaining possession of ball, etc. There's also plenty of temporary hardware to pick up including speed boots, powergloves and Bitmap Shades for extra aggression.

All these features make for a more complex game than the original. Whenever you get the ball you've got a wide variety of choices of how and where to score points. The more you play, the more the special features come into use. After a few matches going for goal, you start developing new tactics; electrifying the ball is particularly useful — get a clear shot on goal and the ball knocks over the goalie on its way in! A more dubious enhancement is the Score Multiplier, which is so vital matches can often turn into endless brawls besides it — frustrating for all involved.

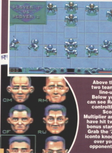
The Inhuman League

Once you've got the hang of the game it's time to try the various leagues. In Knockout you keep playing until beaten. The Cup is a four-round knockout while The League itself has two eight-team divisions and a 14-week season.

The team you always control is Brutal Deluxe which starts as the weakest team in



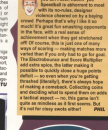




Above the two teams line-up. Below you can see Red controlthe Score Multiplier and have hit two bonus stars. Grab the 'Z' iconto knock over your opponents.

the league. Teams can be upgraded in two ways, both involving spending the spinning coins collected during matches. Firstly between matches you can spend money increasing the stats of players as a team, group (say just forwards) or individually. However, players have maximum limits to their abilities — in which case you might like to swap one, and pay a large fee, for a player up for transfer. This option makes for a substantial long-term challenge so thankfully there's a password save game feature.

Speedball 2 was a massive hit on the Amiga and this superb conversion should see Mega Drivers hip-deep in blood too. Matches are short, fast and very exciting. They may not have the tactical depth of *Kick Off* with all its formations and intricate passing, but a more involved management game helps compensate. ***STU***



If you thought rugger was rough, you ain't seen nothin' yet! Speedball is abhorrent to most with its no-rules, designer violence cheered on by a baying crowd Perhaps that's why I like it so much! It's great fun smashing opponents in the face, with a real sense of achievement when they get stretchered off! Of course, this is just one of many ways of scoring — making matches more varied than if you only had to go for goal. The Electrobounce and Score Multiplier add extra spice, the latter making it possible to quickly close a huge points deficit — so even when you're getting thrashed (literally!), there's always hope of making a comeback. Collecting coins and deciding what to spend them on adds a tactical aspect — no, this game isn't quite as mindless as it first seems. But it's not for cissy swots either! ***PHIL***



Toughen up your team by spending cash on individual, group or team attributes such as speed and attacking force!





- **PRODUCER: SEGA**
- **GG: TBA** ● **MS: TBA**
- **MEMORY: 512K**
- **PLAYERS: 1-2**
- **PRICE: £39.99**

SF Rating

90% PRESENTATION
● Limited password system.

89% VISUALS
● Fast multidirectional scrolling.

79% SONICS
● Oddball intro tune, but good FX.

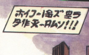
91% PLAYABILITY
● Fast scoring and crunching violence.

89% LASTABILITY
● League, Cup and two-player options.

90% FORCE
● More menacing than Vinny Jones!











STRIDER

Awesome coin-op, superb on MD, STUART WYNNE strides the Master System version

Let's start with the good news; once again the Master System demonstrates its graphical excellence with some superb backdrops and sprites. The Russian towers on Level One have a great sheen about them, while Hiryu Strider himself looks great...

Unfortunately the price of the graphics is gameplay, which has been brutally and almost completely sacrificed to making the game look good. The rushin' Russians may look very fetching in their green greatcoats, but as there's only ever one on screen at a time they're hardly overwhelming. The worse part is their random fire: you can slice through four or five without them doing anything but just as you close on the last one he fires — giving you no chance to react.

Of course you *can* proceed more slowly and carefully, but that risks running out your tight time limit. On Level Two, after defeating the metal gorilla the only real obstacle is time; the circling platforms have been stripped out here (and on the third level). In fact huge chunks are missing throughout the game: the snapping steel shafts in Level One, the robot spiders, the electrical power bolts in Level Two... the list goes on and on.

The price of the graphics is chronic gameplay

The sacrifice of graphical showpieces need not be fatal if the gameplay is there. MD *Castle Of Illusion* is just as awesome graphically as MD *Strider* but the MS version is hardly a disaster — adventure elements have been added in place of graphic spectaculars to make the MS game superior, in many people's opinion, to the original! And what about MS *Sonic*?

Strider certainly doesn't follow their example. There are so many long stretches when there's nothing to worry about except a lone soldier running on screen, tedium soon sets in. Then when there is a graphical spectacular the game slows down massively: beating Level One's end-level guardian requires a crystal ball to predict where the baddie is going to be when your man has finally started moving.

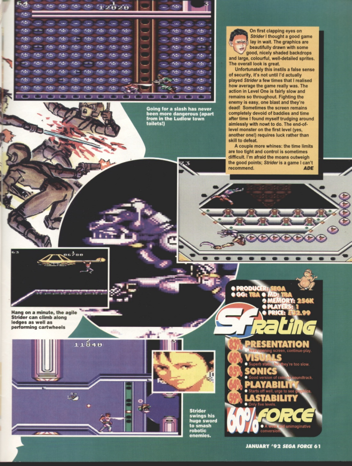
Over and over again crucial energy is lost in situations where control is difficult — this mix of long easy sections and random-death situations is highly frustrating. *Strider* does look very good indeed, and there's a good rendition of the splendid coin-op tune in the background, but there's only five levels and precious little fun to be had out of any of them.

STU

The way it was...

In the 21st century a series of disasters sweep the world at the behest of Grand Master Meio, an alien living on the 'Third Moon' space station. On a demilitarised Earth the main defenders are an elite known as Striders — incredibly athletic warriors armed with laser swords.

The youngest and best is **Hiryu** who begins his quest in Kazaful (Level 1) where Russian troops, a laser-beam trap and a fearsome end-level robot must be defeated. Siberia follows (Level 2), including a now very spartan power-station and static helicopters to leap between. The biggest aircraft takes Hiryu to the flying battleship Ballog (Level 3): blast the gun turrets and defeat a massive spherical robot. Hiryu escapes the ship's wreckage and lands in a jungle (Level 4) where Amazons and dinosaurs must be taken on. The fifth and final level is on the Fifth Moon. Levels are linked by the plot and couple of pics.



Going for a slash has never been more dangerous (apart from in the Ludlow town toilets!)

On first clapping eyes on *Strider* I thought a good game lay in wait. The graphics are beautifully drawn with some good, nicely shaded backdrops and large, colourful, well-detailed sprites. The overall look is great.

Unfortunately this instils a false sense of security, it's not until I'd actually played *Strider* a few times that I realised how average the game really was. The action in Level One is fairly slow and remains so throughout. Fighting the enemy is easy, one blast and they're dead! Sometimes the screen remains completely devoid of baddies and time after time I found myself trudging around aimlessly with nowt to do. The end-of-level monster on the first level (yes, another one!) requires luck rather than skill to defeat.

A couple more whines: the time limits are too tight and control is sometimes difficult. I'm afraid the moans outweigh the good points; *Strider* is a game I can't recommend. ***ADE***

Hang on a minute, the agile Strider can climb along ledges as well as performing cartwheels

Strider swings his huge sword to smash robotic enemies.

- PRODUCER: SEGA
- GG: TBA
- MD: TBA
- MEMORY: 256K
- PLAYERS: 1
- PRICE: £32.99

SF Rating

83% PRESENTATION
- Neat opening screen, continue-play.

68% VISUALS
- Superb static, but they're too slow.

85% SONICS
- Good version of coin-op soundtrack.

64% PLAYABILITY
- Starts off well, urge to see graphics.

59% LASTABILITY
- Only five levels.

60% FORCE
- A weak and unimaginative conversion.



Superb on 16-bit computers, disastrous on 8-bit, Phil King says "yippee!" — the Master System has a game worthy of the Kick Off name.

Reviewed!



SUPER KICK OFF

Complete with a stadium full of options, this is by far and away the best 8-bit version imaginable. The graphics are attractive, the scrolling fast and the superb dribbling ball control has been pretty much preserved.

Inevitably, however, there are some quirks. Yep, it's possible to hit a ball straight across the goal, squarely hit the post, then somehow spin right around the outside of and over the crossbar! More annoying is the way the action periodically slows down when there's a lot happening on the screen and, occasionally, the players or ball briefly disappear. Nevertheless considering the overall pace of the game, it's still a remarkable achievement on the Master System.

The game's pace is probably made possible by a rather sneaky enlargement of the pitch, over the original Amiga game. This means you see less of the pitch on screen and hence less players appear to slow the scroll down. This, along with a tiny radar scanner, makes long-range passing difficult — even though the excellent ball control system has been retained. You can trap the ball by holding down button 1, then select a direction before releasing it to pass to a team-mate in that direction — if there is one.

Swap pad for stick

Until you get the hang of guessing where your players are, play degenerates into the standard end-to-end dribbling of most simple footy games. Of course, the difference — the element unique to the *Kick Off* series — is that the ball isn't stuck to your foot. Instead you have to push it along manually and it's easy to lose control when changing direction. This is very realistic, although a joystick is definitely recommended — using a joypad's very tricky!

Tackling is achieved by either running into the ball or by pressing button 1 for a slide tackle. If the tackle connects the ball flies off at great speed, so gaining possession is hard. Also, sliding tackles always risk being judged a foul, resulting in the victim being injured and substituted, while the offender may be punished with a yellow or red card, plus a free kick against his side.

By far and away the best 8-bit version imaginable

If this is near the opposition's penalty area you get a set-piece kick. Via button-1 and a direction this can be passed to a nearby player, dummied or swerved around the wall of defenders. Direction of corners, throw-ins and goal kicks is similarly selected.

Get your kicks

During normal play, pressing button-1 when in possession results in a set-strength kick forwards. With 'Aftertouch' selected from the pre-match options, this can be swerved left/right by moving in that direction immediately after the kick. This adds yet more to the realism, although you only get a set amount of swerve, and that only happens after the ball has travelled forwards a few feet.

Amazingly, despite all its foibles the game still retains a lot of Amiga *Kick Off 2*'s immense playability, and many a lunchtime has been spent enjoying two-player matches. Quite simply, one of the best two-player games around is still really playable. One-player mode is a bit more problematic: with the computer doing the thinking for your opposition the slow-downs seem a bit more frequent. Another flaw is that the huge club/international eight-team leagues and cups lack a save function.

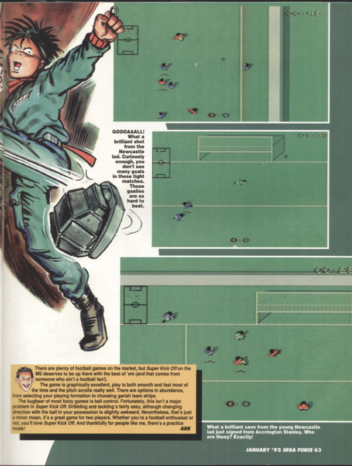
Seeing red

Other options are more useful. You can alter the type of pitch, wind speed, match time (anything from 2 to 20 minutes each way), skill levels for both teams, and referee (ranging from totally blind to red-card-happy).

Pre-match selections include picking the team from your squad, choosing formation (unfortunately not changeable during the match) and whether to play in one/two-player or team mode — the latter having two players on the same side.

A good, comprehensive footy game, then, fast and highly playable. It's not a perfect miracle, the Mega Drive still has room to do better restoring some of the original's subtlety, but it's amazing for 8-bit and well worth buying even for non footy fans (ie Arsenal supporters!).

PHIL



GOOOAAALL! What a brilliant shot from the Newcastle lad. Curiously enough, you don't see many goals in these tight matches. Those goalies are so hard to beat.

There are plenty of football games on the market, but *Super Kick Off* on the MS deserves to be up there with the best of 'em (and that comes from someone who ain't a football fan!).

The game is graphically excellent, play is both smooth and fast most of the time and the pitch scrolls really well. There are options in abundance, from selecting your playing formation to choosing garish team strips.

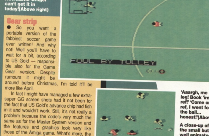
The bugbear of most footy games is ball control. Fortunately, this isn't a major problem in *Super Kick Off.* Dribbling and tackling's fairly easy, although changing direction with the ball in your possession is slightly awkward. Nevertheless, that's just a minor moan, it's a great game for two players. Whether you're a football enthusiast or not, you'll love *Super Kick Off.* And thankfully for people like me, there's a practice mode!

ADE

What a brilliant save from the young Newcastle lad just signed from Accrington Stanley. Who ere theey? Exactly!

From a corner you get nine choices of kick, including in- and out-swingers! (Above)

Waddle loses control again. The young Newcastle winger can't get it in today!(Above right)



Gear strip

● So you want a portable version of the fabbiest soccer game ever written! And why not! Well you'll have to wait for a bit, according to US Gold — responsible also for the Game Gear version. Despite rumours it might be around before Christmas, I'm told it'll be more like April.

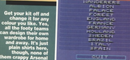
In fact I might have managed a few extra-super GG screen shots had it not been for the fact that US Gold's advance chip had fish in it and wouldn't work. Still, it's not really a problem because the code's very much the same as for the Master System version and the features and graphics look very like those of the Amiga game. What's more, the whole thing runs a deal faster than on the Master System.

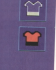
Better still, is that US Gold are planning a link-up version, so you'll be able to play head-to-head with a friend — a good reason to rush out and buy the essential GG links before spring has



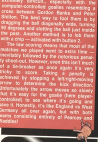
'Aaargh, me leg! Book 'im, ref!' 'Come on ref, I went for the ball... honest!'(Above)

A close-up of the small but well animated players(Left)





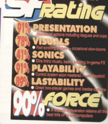
Get your kit off and change it for any colour you like. Yes, all the footy teams can design their own wardrobe for home and away. It's just plain shirts here, though, none of them crappy Arsenal convict arrows!



HOW TO SCORE

● Feeble shot strength makes scoring extremely difficult., especially with the computer-controlled goalies resembling a cross between Gordon Banks and Peter Shilton. The best way to fool them is by dragging the ball diagonally wide, turning 90 degrees and slotting the ball just inside the post. Another method is to lob them with a chip — activated with button 2.

The low scoring means that most of the matches we played went to extra time — inevitably followed by the notorious penalty shoot-out. However, even this isn't much of a tie-breaker as once again it's very tricky to score. Taking a penalty is achieved by stopping a left/right-moving arrow to determine the kick direction. Unfortunately the arrow moves so slowly that it's easy for the goalie (here player-controlled) to see where it's going and save it. Honestly, it's like England vs West Germany all over again, but with both teams consisting entirely of Pearces and Waddles!



● PRODUCER: US GOLD
● GG: FEB ● MD: TBA
● MEMORY: 256K
● PLAYERS: 1-2
● PRICE: £29.99

SF RATING

91% PRESENTATION
● Masses of options including leagues and cups

78% VISUALS
● Fast scrolling pitches — occasional slow-downs

41% SONICS
● Dire intro music, basic kicking in-game FX

91% PLAYABILITY
● Control system soon mastered — with joystick!

89% LASTABILITY
● Great two-player games and loadsa options

90% FORCE
● A superb conversion retains all the best bits of 16-bit computers



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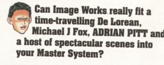
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europress IMPACT





Can Image Works really fit a time-travelling De Lorean, Michael J Fox, ADRIAN PITT and a host of spectacular scenes into your Master System?

Okay, *BTTF 1* is just ending, everyone's happy, but then Doc Brown comes zooming out of the future to make his famous warning. So in *BTTF 2* Doc, Marty and his wife-to-be, Jennifer, set out to ensure their kids are all squeaky-clean, straight-A goodie-two-shoes.

Doesn't sound much of an arcade game but here you are in Hill Valley, 2015, balancing on a hoverboard. Marty's son's got mixed up with the villainous Griff and how do you stop him taking part in a bank robbery?

Basically by floating down a street, punching villains squarely in the mouth, while dodging obstacles such as pedestrians, open manhole covers, stray dogs, trash collectors and cyclists. Keep an eye out for old Biff (Griff's grandfather, *obviously*), who chases after you with his walking stick.

You make the hoverboard go faster by holding down the direction key, punch using Button-1 on the joypad and jump over obstacles with Button-2. A nice touch is the way you can grab hold of cars which zoom past and be pulled along — helping beat a tough time limit. So tough I often failed to get to the second level; and let me tell you, playing Level One over and over is no fun! It's relatively simple and soon wears thin.

Once you rescue Marty's son you change sex. Oo-er, a bit of gender-bender! But truth to tell Jennifer's sprite is nothing to get excited about as you open and shut doors in an overhead view of her house. She mustn't meet anyone else before escaping in this brain-boggling arcade puzzle. Again it's not a bad little sub-game, but continually replaying it is tedious. The best advice is to take note of the baddies' every move and memorise which directions open which doors.

Five ho-hum levels packed into one compact MS cart

Zooooom!...

Back to 1985 for mission three where, on the journey back, Marty and Doc discover things have gone terribly wrong with recent history. Biff managed to steal the De Lorean and nipped back to 1955 to give a sporting Almanac to his younger self — so he could bet on football matches and makes loadsa cash. Makes sense, I think, but it's messed up Time something rotten, turning 1985's Hill Valley into a cold, ruthless place dominated by Biff.

Back in Marty's body you fight off the locals and search for your De Lorean in a dull, horizontally scrolling combat game — using sweep kicks, high kicks, plus high and low punches. Alternatively you can throw frisbees, ashtrays and rocks picked up en route. Rolling barrels, bouncing tyres, falling rocks and the like should be avoided.

Safely inside your De Lorean, 1955 is the next stop, to nick back that Almanac and return Time to its proper course. But first, a quick break, yep it's another puzzle game — a standard sliding-block effort with a picture of Marty playing his guitar to reassemble inside a time limit.

Time up! Now you chase Biff on your hoverboard as he drives through Hill Valley. As in Level One, the streets are littered with numerous obstacles and foes to avoid or punch. The graphics are different and there's cops to worry about too. With Biff's car in sight, you must grab the prized Almanac and prevent the future from going askew. So there you have it, five ho-hum levels packed into one compact MS cart.

Frustration, the wrong sense

The graphics are mediocre, too, with a fair bit of flicker, especially on Level One where more often than not hoverboard and half your body just disappear. Backgrounds are reasonable and improve on later levels — Level Three is far superior graphically than Level One.

Soundwise, there's a weak rendition of the film theme and different dodgy ditties for each of the levels.

There are some games with a difficulty level that keeps you playing for ages, determined to beat your best effort. *BTTF 2* has a frustration level that'll have you reaching for the off button in no time. I don't know about 'back to the future', more like back to the drawing-board!

ADE



No open and shut case in 2015 as, with too many doors in the way, Marty rushes to get Jennifer out of her future home in the overhead sub-game of Level Two

The future beckons in a leafy street, but in 1955 Marty's fallen to puzzled bits...

ACK TO THE UTURE 2

Image Works, what have you done? All that money spent on the film licence, just to produce a game like this! The graphics are some of the most boring I've ever seen on the Master System, and the sprite masking is distinctly dodgy in places. The gameplay is annoying and tedious, especially on the first level, a thoroughly uninteresting driving variation that will have you crying into your till receipt. *Back To The Future 2* is a very weak interpretation of the film, and an all-round shoddy game. ***IAN***

Down-home corn bakes ain't never going to be the same in Biff-horrific 1985. A beat-'em-up level to find the De Lorean

Below: Level 1 hovver bovver in 2015. Can Marty save junior from robbing the bank?

● PRODUCER: IMAGE WORKS
● GG: TBA ● MD: N/A
● MEMORY: 256K
● PLAYERS: 1
● PRICE: £34.99

SF RATING

79% PRESENTATION
● Intro demo, nice opening and interlevel pics

57% VISUALS
● Flickery sprites, but the puzzles look good

56% SONICS
● Weedy but varied tunes

56% PLAYABILITY
● Annoying first level is very discouraging

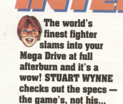
65% LASTABILITY
● Substantantial challenge, but irritating

62% FORCE
● A ho-hum collection of dated mini-games



Reviewed!

F22 INTERCEPTOR



The world's finest fighter slams into your Mega Drive at full afterburn and it's a wow! STUART WYNNE checks out the specs — the game's, not his...

Till now the MD has distinctly lacking in the flight sim department, there were even those who thought it hadn't the power to handle them. Now it has, do we care? I mean flight sims are often boring, repetitive trawls through the skies, ending with missiles out of nowhere flying up your jetpipe because you'd forgotten to activate anti-air-to-air-infra-red-missile-missiles.

Or something.

F22 most definitely isn't that, operating off a single joypad fairly happily. Directional control is by the D-pad, Start pauses and puts you into various menu screens while button-A gives Afterburners, B whichever missile you've selected and C is for cannons. Usually this works well: in the fighter of the future you can easily imagine the undercarriage deploying automatically, the wing changing so you don't have to worry about flaps. Also the omission of rudder control — so you can change direction without banking the plane — is compensated for by a 'wheel' option, selectable via an in-game menu.

> **A landmark cart that puts you right in the battle**

Some omissions are worrying though: the lack of brakes and engine on/off eliminates certain dog-fighting manoeuvres, not to mention making landing a bit hairy!

Combat Russia

Game structure is also stripped down from the normal. The four 'combat zones' are the USA, Korea, Iraq and Russia, each including 30 progressively more difficult missions. This sounds a lot but missions are far from the usual 'take off, head to way-points 1–3, refuel, hit radar station, hit main target, return to base.'

Instead each Zone can be thought of as one massive mission broken into thirty segments.

In the USA, for example, once you take off you get some gunnery practice, that done you get a congratulations message, a nicely cinematic view of your plane zooming away (an optional extra) and then a quick briefing for the next 'mission'.

Mostly this works very well; there's non-stop action with some great interlevel breaks. However if you get seven bells knocked out of you during a mission there's no way you can turn tail and run — you have to complete the mission before the KC-135 turns up with ammo and repairs.

It's also a shame all the targets are usually so tightly clustered, offering little chance to plan attack routes. But on the other hand EA have worked hard over enemy intelligence with aggression ratings, and even a pilot panic on/off option!

There's also a save position system, with passwords available at any time. Sadly they don't record ammo/damage levels, or skill levels which must be set, but cheats will appreciate that!

There are in fact three skill levels, the lowest having less intelligent enemies, slower combat and 'ground avoidance' which means you can't hit the ground! As you progress further you might like to try creating your own challenges, using the extensive customisation option to develop your own choice of enemy waves, numbers and types of vehicles, intelligence and so on.

And if that isn't enough, how about trying on a few Ace pilots in The Challenge? There are nine levels to this, beginning with you facing American, Iraqi, Korean and Russian pilots in turn. Beat these and they come at you in pairs...

Majestic Mayhem

Where *F22* really scores is in putting you right in the heart of a battle, eyeball to eyeball with MiG pilots and ack-ack gunners. Tracer bullets whizz by, the sun's glare reds out the screen, a gunship helicopter whirls into sight, brilliantly detailed, a missile roars overhead with a superb whooshing sound. 'Break' says the computer, you fire off tracers yourself then release a missile, the screen follows it in. Bang! A brilliant explosion, a pilot ejects and you see his seat rockets ignite before the parachute opens. Then there's a cinematic replay of the action, before congratulations, mission over, another exterior view as you power on to the next mission.

F22 offers action, action and more action. The graphics are brilliant. The scaling isn't completely realistic and ground details are sparse, but all objects are packed with polygons for superb realism as they whoosh past the cockpit. The rock 'n' roll soundtrack is so-so, but can be turned off so you only get the effects — which are tremendous.

If you want a minutely detailed, completely realistic sim, *F22* may disappoint, but for everyone else this stunning program finally puts you into the cockpit of a MD shoot-'em-up, giving you a first-person perspective of those missiles and fighters out to fry your ass!

STU



In Aces Challenge you're pitted against the world's best pilots. Above there's a chase plane view of your F-22 dogfighting a MiG-19, MiG-21 and MiG-29. Below it's ground attack time with a tank going up in flames under a hail of cannon fire.

Pressing 'Up' and 'Start' gives a 360 exterior view. Here your F-22 overshoots a gunship helicopter.

Taking off is easy, but landing on a carrier is even tougher than air-to-air refuelling. Wimps can turn off these tricky bits though!

F-22 is an intriguing hybrid, stripping out all the boring flight sim stuff and leaving just the action. You can even choose to be automatically refuelled/re-armed without tricky landings or air-to-air refuelling. Of all the flight sims I've played, this is the easiest to get into with all the minor details taking caring of themselves. My only gripe is that occasionally when trying to get chaff/flares (A & C buttons) I panicked and got into a menu screen by mistake. *F-22* certainly makes you sweat with G-force-induced blackouts and red-outs, gunship helicopters, three types of enemy fighters, tanks, anti-aircraft guns and night missions to worry about. Undoubtedly a landmark cart and a must for all Farnborough fans!

PHIL

● PRODUCER: ELECTRONIC ARTS
● GG: N/A ● MS: N/A
● MEMORY: 768K
● PLAYERS: 1
● PRICE: £39.95

SF Rating

93% PRESENTATION
● Masses of options including limited save

94% VISUALS
● Beautifully detailed, impressively fast 3-D

87% SONICS
● Okay soundtrack, great FX

91% PLAYABILITY
● Easy early levels provide quick addiction

90% LASTABILITY
● Loadsa missions plus customisation option

90% FORCE
● The supreme dogfighter



Reviewed!

OUTRUN EUROPA

I have to be honest: I miss the out-and-out fun of the coin-op. The new secret-agent plotline — you play Simeon Kurtz — makes it a bit too much like any other game for my tastes. I mean leaving secret documents in your F-40 only to find it nicked, then your lovable bosses putting out a warrant for your arrest as a presumed double agent isn't a feel-good sort of trip. On the other hand 2 Megabits really isn't enough for the epic sonics and graphics needed for the classic *OutRun* experience.

Master System *Europa* is an intriguing development of the home computer game by US Gold. To fit 256K some graphics have been dropped, but by way of compensation far more combat action's been added.

Your journey begins in the UK, leaping onto a motorbike and giving chase to your beloved F-40, not that you see its exhaust trail until the final level! As you'd expect the roads are filled with madmen, all eager to knock you off. It's just as well US Gold have fitted your Triumph with a force-field! This saves them animating a crash sequence — if your shield wears out you simply explode and it's game over. Shield power is replenished by racing over shield packs which, naturally enough, are scattered all across the road to the Dover — along with turbo boosts and ammunition clips.

Shaving the fuzz

Ammo isn't needed on the first level as Mr Kurtz deals with enemy bikes by punching them! This definitely isn't recommended on police cars — they have the sneaky habit of winding down the window and snapping on the old handcuffs. Dealing with the fuzz is best done by putting your foot down and do a turbo fart in their faces!

Well, at least you've got some chance on a Triumph superbike rather than a Metro 0.1 and before you know it you arrive at Dover, just in time to see the villains sail away on a ferry. Being a typical member of Her Majesty's law enforcement agencies, charged with upholding the law etc, you simply nick a jetski and give chase.

Jetskiin' ain't simply motorbikin' with different graphics; there's buoys to avoid, motorboats to ram and a helicopter bombing you. Thankfully our hero doesn't try to headbutt this! — no, he finally reaches for the old oozy nine-millimetre and shoots back. Otherwise it's a beautiful day for a cruise with a nice ocean effect, but the arcade action's a little hampered by there only ever being one enemy onscreen at a time...

A corking game that oozes character and variety

Next stop's Calais. Exchange the jetski for a Porsche 911, and it's time to hit the road again for a tougher version of Level One. Graphic restrictions show up with dull French scenery, but the Porsche looks okay.

At Barcelona it's time to hotwire a powerboat. This level's much the same as the jetski with more obstacles to dodge in a bigger vehicle. Once you arrive in Germany the F-40 is finally in sight and you've gotta run your beloved car off the road to recover those precious documents. Snappy gunplay and dodge-'em-style driving should win the day.

As for the game itself, all these added elements, the combat and the various different vehicles certainly help compensate for the lack of great visual variety. There's not much difference between a 911 and a F-40 in gameplay terms, but the bike has its own feel and getting a new toy to try out is always fun. Especially as the levels are so tough, each having several sub-sections to complete inside tight time-limits — take a wrong turning and they seem all but impossible!

The police cars and boats are also good fun: if you haven't got a turbo, avoiding arrest requires very skilful driving. Then there's all the objects to collect, so simply keeping on the tarmac and avoiding other traffic isn't enough; there's always something happening to keep you sweating. There's only ever one object or vehicle on the road at a time, but the speed they appear at combined with some very tight corners means you don't really notice this limitation.

Graphics are the game's other main selling point: colourful, fast and packed with detail. There's no flicker and the speed's terrific. Predictably sound isn't quite as good, but there's a decent title tune and bearable in-game music.

Europa lacks the California blondes, laid-back feel of the coin-op but the variety of action and intense combat more than compensate. The plot is carried forward at each new level by some small but well-done pics, plus text, and you really get involved with it all. If you fancy a trip round Europe with plenty of speed and action, buy *Outrun Europa* and forget the Highway Code!

ADE



At the wheel of your F-40 at last, shooting the enemy to smithereens.

No time to admire the white cliffs of Dover as you turbo-boost past the fuzz.

Driving games tend to be plot-less and samey, but *Europa*'s in a class of its own. Graphics are outstanding, animating well without a hint of jerkiness, and intelligent use of colour really gives the impression of being there.

A couple of criticisms. When you let go of the joystick, your vehicle grinds to a halt. This is fairly standard in driving games, but still very hard on the thumb, especially if you're using a joypad. When will designers create a game that actually uses the bog-standard pull-down-to-brake control, and let you cruise with the joy-stick in neutral? Also, there are no contin-ue-plays, which is a bit of a pain.

Quibbling aside, *Europa* is a corking game that just oozes character and variety. US Gold have given a new lease of life to a very stale concept, and created a game destined to become an all-time classic.

IAN

EUROPA



Go too slow and the long arm of the law soon feels your collar.

US Gold's sequel replaces rock tunes and leggy babes with secret agents, powerboats, combat action and ADRIAN PITT — he's just lost his Ferrari... say 'Aaaahh!'

Watch out for the floating hazards — and Robert Maxwell!



- PRODUCER: US GOLD
- GG: TBA
- MD: TBA
- MEMORY: 256K
- PLAYERS: 1
- PRICE: £29.99

SF Rating

73% PRESENTATION
- Interlevel pics, but no continue-plays

90% VISUALS
- Colourful, highly detailed and very fast!

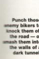
88% SONICS
- Decent, varying tunes

89% PLAYABILITY
- Simple to get into, but tough...

86% LASTABILITY
- Five levels provide a varied challenge



87% FORCE
- A real high-speed thriller





Punch those enemy bikers to knock them off the road — or smash them into the walls of a dark tunnel.



HARD

Don't you just hate Sunday afternoon drivers? Little old men, in cloth caps (with big ears), crouched down in the seat, following a crease up the map?! You'll be glad to know there are no Morris Minors in *Hard Drivin'*, just a rather exotic sports car and a mean stretch of road ahead.

Originally a driving simulator, then a coin-op, it was the first game to prove the Mega Drive could really handle 3-D — and it's been out a while on off-white import, still...

First things first, before setting off on the open road several decisions are to be made — which side of the road to drive on (!), how to control gears, and even how the speed and road signs are displayed (miles or kilometres) For novice drivers, there's a rather handy practice mode, which disables the in-game timer and leaves the road devoid of traffic, but daring types with nerves of steel and dark-coloured underwear set the game difficulty to *hard*... and go, GO!, *GOOOOOOOO!!!*

"Realism is high in the stunning solid 3-D"

Cunning stunts

STOP! You've forgotten your map: no creases on this nifty onscreen display, just a detailed overview of the two routes you choose from at the start of a run. The Speed Track.is the easier of the two, containing open stretches of tarmac for high-speed driving. The Stunt Track is for the more advanced driver, with an enormous bridge jump, a 360-degree loop-the-loop and a massive banked turn.

The coin-op was originally developed as an aid to driving tuition and the Mega Drive version is just as realistic, especially the stunning filled 3-D graphics with impressive buildings and obstacles. The road itself is incredibly smooth-scrolling. I challenge anyone not to sit there swaying from side to side as the car loops the loop and zooms around high-banked corners! Sound's of a similarly high quality with a neat title tune and in-game rhythm 'n' blues — suitable music to drive to, I reckon!

The most realistic element is the toughest: other drivers! The unique experience of pulling out to pass a car only to find a lorry bearing down on you is effin' terrifying. There's no use playing too safe though: you have 1 minute 45 seconds to complete a whole lap. Passing checkpoints extends your play time, but if it runs out the game finishes.

And that's not all you have to worry about: buildings, embankments, fences and cows (!!) are all waiting to leap out at you! Go too fast over hills or jumps and there's the threat of a crash landing. All collisions are followed by an excellent exterior-view instant replay. One unrealistic but welcome element is that you continue after crashes, minus a few seconds penalty time.

If you wander onto the side of the road, you're allowed ten seconds to get back. Try not to go faster than 100mph in the turns: some of them are damned sharp and there's a chance you'll spin off. Whenever possible, keep an eye on your dashboard, which shows the usual RPM and MPH, along with a display which flashes if fuel or oil are low.

Two tracks too few

Each lap has a challenge time: beat this and you get to race against the Phantom Photon, the *Hard Drivin'* champion. Be warned, if you crash, or stay off-road for longer than ten seconds, the challenge automatically ends. Beat the Phantom to become champ and your performance is recorded for others to race against — until you turn the machine off.

Now for the gripes. The joypad is definitely not suited to this type of game. I tried playing with a joystick and found the car a lot easier to control. The joypad had me swerving this way and that and spinning here there and everywhere (okay, so that's what my driving's like anyway!).

More seriously, I'm unsure about the game's lastability, with only two tracks to choose from I found boredom setting in after a while, but then it was the same sort of set-up in the coin-op. If you loved that, you'll be happy with this near-perfect conversion.

ADE

● CHEAT! You can get double lastability by racing around tracks the wrong way! It can be done but one crash sends you back to the beginning, so drive with care!

Holy wooden cow! Here's the official release of the 3-D road sim that separates boy racers from wheel men. We join ADRIAN 'loop the loopy' PITT on the third circuit...



After each new spectaclar crash you get a chance to review your mistakes with this superb exterior action replay.

DRIVIN'

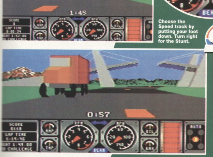
An excellent conversion of the coin-op, but it's too close to the original for its own good. The limited number of tracks isn't a problem in the arcades, but it's very serious on a £40-a-throw cartridge game. *Hard Drivin'* is one of the most exciting and original driving games ever, it's fast, the graphics are good, and the stunt track puts a whole new perspective on the genre. With more track variation it would be an essential purchase, but as it stands there isn't enough to it to justify shelling out the dosh. ***IAN***



Watch your speed as you zoom round bends — you don't want to spin off.



Choose the Speed track by putting your foot down. Turn right for the Stunt.





- PRODUCER: TENGEN
- GG: N/A
- MD: N/A
- MEMORY: 512K
- PLAYERS: 1
- PRICE: £34.99

SF rating

82% PRESENTATION
- Pre-game map and great instant replay

90% VISUALS
- Proves MD can handle fast solid 3-D!

78% SONICS
- R'n'B soundtrack with good FX!

88% PLAYABILITY
- Very addictive,a bit tricky with joypad

67% LASTABILITY
- Only two routes makes it repetitive

81% FORCE
- Great conversion lacking only lastability due to coin-op design

Win! Win!



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- All you have to do is tell us the name of the silly robot in the 1980s TV series, you know, the one that always went, 'Beedee beedee beedee...'!
- Easy, huh? Now just write the answer together with your name, address and choice of EA game (if you're a runner-up) on the back of an envelope or postcard and send it to BUCKING FOR PRIZES COMP, SEGA FORCE, EuroPress Impact, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1JW. And get it in before the 25th century! 7 February, 1992, actually.

Who the buck's Rogers? Only the world's most famous test pilot, that's who! Or at least, he was until he was doomed to centuries of cryogenic sleep — a bit like Adey Babes on a Monday morning — when his prototype spaceship met with a nasty accident.

He woke up with a headache in the 25th century just in time to help the Earth Defence Trajectory in their battle against the dread Draconians, led by Killer Kane and Princess Ardola (in between her attempts to get into Buck's pants as a means of seducing hi to the dark side).

Sounds like fun. Well the TV series wasn't wonderful, but SSI's original Amiga game, *Buck Rogers Vol1 — Countdown to Doomsday*, was a stunner through its sophisticated control system and tactical combat.

Now Electronic Arts are recreating it for what could well be the Mega Drive's best RPG yet, and it will be out in early '92. To celebrate this event, EA have organised this brill SEGA FORCE competition. Sadly they only do MD games so far, but with their software line-up, if you win you'll just *have* to get a Mega Drive!



THINKING

3-D board: difficult to use but it looks more interesting

Sega CHESS

Reviewed!

A 'real' intro knight; what's he do when he's taken short? Rust?

Less impressive but a bit more usable — the flat board, below

CHECKMATE

At last — a quality chess sim with no fancy gimmicks! IAN OSBORNE pits his sparky wits against Sega's Kasparov.

I hate it when supposedly serious simulations are full of memory-hogging garbage you don't really need! So, it would appear, do Sega — you won't may graphic fills here, just a whole host of options that increase the game's versatility and make it one of the best chess sim I've ever seen.

The pieces are still well drawn and easily recognisable on the cream-and-tan board. Two modes of display are available: 3-D view and a less impressive, but more practical 2-D perspective. Options are the real stars though, all accessed through a brilliant icon system. No less user-friendly is piece movement; just highlight the square held by the piece in question, then press again on the square on which you intend to place it — illegal moves aren't allowed.

Grand master flash

In solo mode, there are nine skill levels to choose from, beginner to grand master. You can also play against a friend, or just watch the computer play itself! Obviously, the higher the level the longer the computer opponent takes to make a move, but *Sega Chess* allows you to 'force' it to move, speeding things up dramatically. Select the adaptive option and after the first ten moves the computer limits its thinking time to the average of yours, allowing you to dictate the pace.

If you get stuck, ask the computer to suggest a move for you, rewind the game a move at a time, or change sides during play! Unfortunately, there's no onboard replay mode, but a completed game can be catalogued using standard notation.

Sega Chess is one of the best chess sims ever seen

You can even set up the board to your own specifications. This can be used to solve those chess puzzles you see in the *Daily Mail* (perhaps that's why no-one offers cash prizes any more!). A game such as this hardly lends itself to amazing sonics, but there's an entertaining title tune, and spot FX when moving a piece. Optional speech synthesis tells you whose move it is and warns when a player is in check.

All the standard chess moves are possible, such as castling, en passant, and the promotion of a pawn on the eighth rank to a piece of your choice. Resigning is not catered for, but then I don't suppose you need it.

Throwing a curve

Naturally, a chess game stands or falls on the quality of artificial intelligence offered by the computer opponent. Again, Sega have done a magnificent job — *Sega Chess* does seem to play like a real person. The difficulty curve is good, with the beginner's level reasonably easy without being moronic. However, your opponent plays a very defensive game, and is perhaps a little overcautious — even when you have just your king, it takes ages to achieve checkmate.

Experts could find even the toughest level a little easy, but most MS owners will find themselves well catered for. If you can't play chess, a club is the best beginning, but this program is a useful adjunct and enthusiasts will find it fun too. **IAN OSBORNE**

- PRODUCER: SEGA
- GG: TBA
- MD: TBA
- MEMORY: 256K
- PLAYERS: 1-2
- PRICE: £34.99

SF rating

90% PRESENTATION
- Good use of menus and icons

61% VISUALS
- Practical and functional

34% SONICS
- Reasonable intro tune, a few spot FX

95% PLAYABILITY
- Could hardly be any more user-friendly

92% LASTABILITY
- It'll keep you amused for hours at a time

93% FORCE
- Against competition, a brilliant adaptation of an acient game



Dolled up in fatigues, ADRIAN PITT makes up his meagre income as a mercenary, but is the effort as playable as its ancestors?

MERCS

After Oli North and Fawn Hall it's hard to dismiss any plot, but it's still a bit dodgy to find a former US President sneaking around Central Africa negotiating peace with incredibly critical military secrets in his briefcase. Anyway he is and sure enough some nasty rebels kidnap him to torture him to death. But rather than just levelling the country, as in Grenada, Panama and Iraq, the Americans send a couple of mercenaries — Mercs.

So here we are, or rather you alone: due to budgetary limitations the coin-op's two-player mode has been dropped. There are still seven overhead-view multidirectionally scrolling levels including a hush-hush mission across an enemy ship, a swim through treacherous waters stealing enemy rafts and a battle past cannons to neutralise a missile base. The final level has an original touch: you shoot an enemy plane to stop it taking off with the Prez onboard.

Fearsome firepower

You're equipped with a trusty M-16, a stock of Megabombs, a healthy supply of energy and a time limit. Most are boosted by walking over wooden crates. For weapons freaks there's the usual range of collectable hardware: a machine gun, flame thrower, rocket launcher and shotgun, all with limited ammo (unlike the M-16!). You can even climb into an abandoned jeep to mow down the enemy!

Oddly, the opposition walk straight past their own crated hardware, instead banging away furiously with rifles and throwing loads of grenades.

To make things even harder (aaarrrrgh!) there's an abundance of huge tanks and gun emplacements to fill the screen with even more deadly fire.

Mine's bigger'n yours

At the end of each level it's mega-baddie-confrontation time. On Level One a giant hovering jet appears. You need to chuck just about everything at it to blow it to smithereens. This same format applies on later levels. The enemy send anything from an armoured vehicle to a helicopter, a battleship to a railroad cannon. These super-vehicles are very well done. As in the coin-op they impress for their size and detail. They're certainly tough, and you sure need those continue-plays.

Even so, the normal Arcade game isn't that tough — Level Four is soon reached. For real arcade experts there's the special Original Mode with longer levels, a different plot and some enemies changed. Combine this with *no* continue-plays and lastability is vastly increased. Other options include three skill levels, choice of control method for shots, sound test and a rapid fire facility.

Whichever Mode you play, the MD game is blessed with lots of beautifully drawn, colourful graphics. Sound is gritty and atmospheric and gameplay is certainly challenging. A game you'll come back to time and time again.

Easy to master

Sadly Master System *Mercs* is professionally executed dullness. Graphics are clear and colourful but not véry large. Sound is below par with a dire title tune, weak in-game ditties and sparse FX.

Worst of all, the game's far too easy. There's a few static gun emplacements and tanks but mostly it's just troops. Rather graciously these only attack in pairs, firing just a few shots and throwing the odd grenade. Sometimes it's possible to run through the shortened levels, pressing the fire button without being hit once. Challenging to play? Is it heck!

Okay, there *is* a harder level of play, but the easier level shouldn't be *that* easy! One member of our reviewing team (who shall remain nameless for fear of giving him a big head!) completed all seven stages on his first go!

That, I guess, is the key to MS *Mercs* — it's for youngsters who haven't played this sort of game dozens of times before and haven't got those arcade reflexes finely honed yet.

Playing MS *Mercs* instils a feeling of, 'been there, done that, bought the T-shirt'. It really is old hat and not a patch on the frenetic action of the MD game. It amazes me Sega have the audacity to release it at such an exorbitant price. Mercenary or what?!

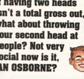
ADE

MD *Mercs* is simply brilliant. Sega have made it fast, hard and incredibly playable. There really are hordes of enemy troops filling the screen — you daren't even blink for fear of getting hit. The action may be unoriginal — with eight-way scrolling borrowed from *Commando*, vehicle and water sections from *Ikari Warriors*, and power-ups from *Victory Road* — but it's so well executed and playable. A truly classic blast with a massive challenge to keep you coming back for more. My only slight gripe is the omission of the coin-op's brill two-player mode.

Tru, also, of the MS game, but it's a pale imitation of its big brother, with virtually no challenge whatsoever. The enemies are totally thick and have little firepower to worry about. Although generally well drawn, the end-of-level baddies are also a cinch to defeat. Even the 'Hard' skill level isn't so difficult, and the end sequence (yes, I'm the mega-talented one who completed it!) is just as disappointing. ***IAN***







If having two heads isn't a total gross out, what about throwing your second head at people? Not very social now is it, IAN OSBORNE?

DECAPATTACK

This oddball game has a suitably weird pedigree including very silly names such as *Psycho Fox* (the original MS game) and *Magical Flying Hat Turbo Adventure* (the first MD version). I ask you, what next, *Phil's Rabid Tomato Eats Ludlow?*

But it gets worse: yep, there's a scenario behind *Decapattack* and it's a corker — don't proceed unless you've got a strong stomach!

Okay, still with us? Well you play Chuck D Head (Aargh!), a fiendish creation of Frank N. Stein (Ouch!), and one ugly dude. Having been told he was so forgetful he would lose his head if it wasn't glued on (Urgh!), Frank went on to create a creature who frequently does — you. To compensate, he put an extra head in your chest — well they say two heads are better than one! (Aaaargh!)

Connected to the shin bone

You were lovingly created (or should that read 'loosely tied together?') to repair your island home which, funnily enough, is falling apart at the seams too. In keeping with the pseudo-horror theme, the island is shaped like a skeleton and the game's compulsory bad guy, Max D Cap, has torn it limb from limb. Your job is to fight through each of the seven parts of the island, beating the baddies, collecting the coins, pinching the potions, and more.

After each level (which consists of three stages), a limb is reconnected to the main body. Don't ask me how running through a platform-and-ladders game collecting things will achieve this cartographic miracle, but then nothing else in this game makes sense either!

Gameplay is remarkably unremarkable, being basically an eight-way scrolling platform opus, featuring some imaginatively drawn baddies such as walking skulls and flying ducks which, sadly, don't act all that intelligently. These can be defeated by jumping on them twice, *Mario Brothers*-style, or by extending your second head to knock them off the platform. This sounds a little silly, but is straightforward enough and is brilliantly illustrated. Later in the game you find your 'proper' head which can be thrown at the enemy!

Not exactly original, but still great fun to play

To further aid you in your quest, Doctor Frank N. Stein and Igor (sigh — how did I know his assistant would be called Igor?) are preparing some very special power-up potions. These make you faster, stronger, harder, cause an 'earthquake' (ie smart bomb), freeze the enemies, etc. The lab is accessed through the 'A' button and lets you ask what each potion does, how many coins you have, and check your health as well as using a potion. Potions are found inside 'shrunken head statues' which are scattered throughout the island and look suspiciously like Bart Simpson! But some statues contain baddies instead of goodies, so beware!

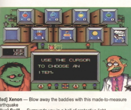
After each level, there's a short bonus routine which can only be played if you've collected some coins. Depending on how many you have, you start with one to five Chucks. Your task is to send them on a journey through a maze, collecting as many bonus prizes as possible en route.

Only platforms and ladders

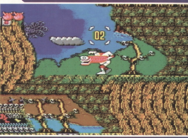
The gameplay obviously isn't that sophisticated, but is definitely set apart by its weird and wonderful graphics which are up to real cartoon standard. This is the sort of game that when you play, everyone else in the room gathers around to watch. The smallish sprites are excellently drawn, and the animation is hilarious, especially when Chuck throws his head (ugh)! Backgrounds are equally impressive and add real flavour.

The biggest drawback with *Decapattack* is that however well presented, it's still only a platforms-and-ladders game, and as such is hardly original. Every element has been seen before in one form or another, and Chuck's island romp adds nothing new to an already over-used genre. It's still great fun though and if your cartridge collection is totally devoid of platform games, you could do worse than invest in a copy. If not, then it's nothing to lose your head over. (Aargh! — Ed)

IAN



[Red] **Xenon** — Blow away the baddies with this made-to-measure earthquake
[Blue] **Swill** — Surrounds you in a ball of protective light
[Orange] **Trioxy** — A powerful light weapon
[Green] **Freiz** — Freezes all on-screen baddies
[Test Tubes] **Claxy** — Makes you run faster and jump higher
[Orange, flat-bottomed container] **OozeO2** — Extends your reach and improves your punch
[Coin] — Number of coins collected
[Sprite] — Number of lives remaining
[Hearts] — Current state of health



You start the game with three lives and two hit-hearts, displayed in the top right-hand corner of the screen. Each heart takes two hits: when both hearts are dead, you lose a life.

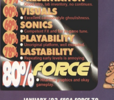


Being a zany kinda guy, I tend to like a game that has a sense of humour! *Decapattack* certainly is weird, but I'm afraid it's not all that wonderful.

Starting with the good points. Presentation is excellent, with a nice opening sequence and in-game icon sequence for using objects. The humour element makes for some superb cartoonesque graphics. They're big, bold, colourful and beautifully animated. Watching old Chuck fling his head round the screen is amusing in itself. The sound isn't terribly special, but it adds to the slapstick feel of the game, I suppose and the spot FX are quite nice.

Gripes are as follows. The gameplay is fairly unoriginal *and* rather easy. Run and jump about, biffing things and collecting objects... a bit long in the tooth now, methinks. Apart from the graphics, *Decapattack* has nothing that makes it stand out from the other games in this genre. **ADE**





- PRODUCER: SEGA
- GG: N/A
- MS: N/A
- MEMORY: 512K
- PLAYERS: 1
- PRICE: £34.99

SF RATING

79% PRESENTATION
- Good intro, lab inventory, no continues.

90% VISUALS
- Excellent cartoon-style ghoulishness.

69% SONICS
- Competent FX and fair in-game tune.

80% PLAYABILITY
- Unoriginal platform, well executed.

78% LASTABILITY
- Repeating early levels is annoying.

80% FORCE
- Hilarious graphics and okay gameplay.



I have reservations about playing Game Gear hack-'em-ups: usually both graphics and gameplay are mediocre. Sometimes the sprites are so small you can't see what the heck they are. Take *Rastan Saga*, for example; it was awful!

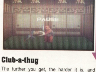
Ninja Gaiden suffers from none of these faults. The action never lets up, furious sword swishing all the way! The animation of the main sprite and baddies is great. I love the way the ninjas bound out of trees to clonk you one. All graphics are crisp and colourful. The backdrops are adequate, thankfully you don't lose yourself in them, and there are some nice presentation screens between stages.

The levels are a mite bit easy and the end-of-level baddies don't take too long to kill. Even so, *Ninja Gaiden* is a playable game, not the best thing on the Game Gear, but at least it's addictive.

ADE

Sailing on the Seven Seas with Ninja Gaiden. Well drawn backdrops make this hack-'em-up rise above the usual lack of detail Game Gear graphic probs!

Who cares what the title means? It's got 'ninja' in there, it'll sell. IAN OSBORNE grabs a katana to find out if it should.



As hack-'em-ups go, *Ninja Gaiden* could be a lot worse. A horizontally scrolling epic in the *Shinobi* mould, you jump and hack your way through various stages, leaping over obstacles and blowing away enemies. The graphics are exciting, it runs very quickly, and the animation is near perfect.

Not the best thing on Game Gear, but it's addictive

Where a lot of Game Gear software of this genre fails is that the sprites are either too big for the screen, or so small they lack detail — not so with *Ninja Gaiden*, which strikes a very playable medium.

The game features a wide variety of enemies, from moronic thugs that try to run through you, to sneaky bomb-throwing heavies. Others include kamikaze swordsmen falling from the trees, nasty machine gunners, and divers firing harpoons as they leap out of the water!

Club-a-thug

The further you get, the harder it is, and those power-ups sure come in useful, especially the missile weapons and energy potions. Unfortunately, there are one or two question marks over the gameplay. Every time you die you return to the beginning of the level, even if nearly at the end. This is hellishly annoying. Also, the end-of-level baddies are very easy to kill once you've mastered the method of attack. This is especially true for the first, a huge thug with a club. All you have to do is stand in front of him and slash away till he dies.

On the plus side there's a password system to prevent you from getting bored with the early levels, which is a great idea. The sound is reasonably effective and the between-level screens are well drawn, though there's no intro sequence.

All in all, *Ninja Gaiden* is reasonably good, but could have been a whole lot better with a little spit and polish.

IAN

- PRODUCER: SEGA
- MS: N/A
- MD: N/A
- MEMORY: 128K
- PLAYERS: 1
- PRICE: £24.99

SF Rating

79% PRESENTATION
- No intro, but good password system

84% VISUALS
- Well-drawn and animated sprites

72% SONICS
- Good spot effects, reasonably interesting tune

69% PLAYABILITY
- Marred by lack of mid-level start-up points

71% LASTABILITY
- Fair learning curve, but you won't play forever

71% FORCE
- playable hack-'em-up that won't make you commit suicide after buying it

GUTTER SNIPE

He's hip, he's cool, he's lewd, he really is one helluva dude, his humour's full if a bit ripe, you know he's nice 'cos he smokes a pipe, he's trendy, too, and likes smelling fresh grass, all in all he's quite a smart...



Fairly obviously, this isn't a picture of me (unless I'm a shadow of my former self. No, some smartass of a designer on the Mac thought this would be a witticism. Vey funny. Huh!

They stuck me right at the end — 'You'll make a good filler if there's space, Gutter Snipe,' they said, 'or if the worst comes to the worst, you'll stop the words falling off the end of the mag'. Thank you. Now you've read the whole load, whad'ya think of it (or are you like me, the sort of gumbo who flicks through a mag backwards, in which case 'Hi, hallo and welcome to SEGA FORCE, Britain's newest, brightest etc...'. I don't really want to print your letters, but seeing as how you'll probably want to moan, groan and generally chew the cud, and seeing as how I won't get paid if I don't, I may. Anyway, if you wanna scrawl a few well-chosen lines send them to: GUTTER SNIPE, SEGA FORCE, Europress Impact, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1JW.

And, good grief, here are the first few...

Sonic got me

Dear Gut,

I'm writing to your mag as I've no doubt it will be the best piece of Sega-oriented literature ever written and because I know your answers to the following questions will be totally forthright, deadly serious and incredibly thought-provoking. So, here goes:

1. Is it true that in 1979, Adrian Pitt (staff writer extraordinaire), got stuck in a lift with Bonnie Langford, a hula-hoop salesman and three members of the Moscow Flying Circus?
2. Did I see Stuart Wynne a week last Thursday in Chester High Street wearing a pac-a-mac, Ninja Turtle ski-pants and a pair of swimming goggles?
3. Is there life after *Sonic The Hedgehog*?.

I trust your reply will be one hundred per cent honest and above board.

George Keenan OBE. PhD. TiT, In a small Gateways carrier bag, somewhere on the M6.

Well, that's a good start.
1. Yes, he'll never forget Bonnie singing to keep their peckers up. After that, even the Pet Shop Boys seem musical!
2. Unlikely, he never wears anything in public.
3. Not after you've headbutted a juggernaut, there ain't.

Back from beyond

Dear Mr Snipe,

I've been to an incredibly remote place for the past five years and thus have missed out on the current boom in Sega peripherals. Fortunately, I'm back just in time to buy a copy of SEGA FORCE! Please could you advise me as to the best machine available on which I can view my favourite soap opera, *Prisoner*? Thank you.

T Waite, Anywhere but Lebanon.

If you must spend years in solitude take a Game Gear with you and get an overseas subscription to SEGA FORCE!

Suicide-packed

Wow, Snipe-man,

My mate Colin says that if you record the theme music from *Back to the Future 2* on the Master System and then play it backwards, you uncannily get a rejiggled version of the '70s classic *Chirpy, Chirpy, Cheep, Cheep* by Middle Of The Road. Can you confirm this, or is it a load of cobblers?

It's true that *BTTF2 is much more likely to incite suicide than a Judas Priest album!*

Give 'em one for me

Dear Gutter

Just a quick note to congratulate you on the first issue of SEGA FORCE. Love the paper quality, love the colour and not too many typos in sight. Keep it up!

Dominic Handie, a real Pro Yo-Yo

Thanks for the kind things you say, Dom, must make you feel like a real dingbat.

No porkies

For several years I've subscribed to *Pig Swiller's Weekly*, an entertaining read, jam-packed with news, reviews and gossip on the pig world. I'm toying with getting SEGA FORCE instead, but I need convincing that yours is THE magazine to buy. What has it to offer me that *PSW* can't?

The pages ain't covered in as many turds for a start, otherwise swill's the same everywhere...

Confused

Sir. I've been reading SEGA FORCE ever since page 1 and I think the mag's marvellous. But I'm a little confused. If this is your first issue, how come you're already printing letters from readers?

Michael J Fox, Twentieth Century Fox, Hollywood

Don't you know!? SEGA FORCE is so fast it gets there before it left. Talking of which, this looks dangerously like the bottom of the page........

europress IMPACT

md ms gg

Next Month

THERE'S TROUBLE BREWING...!

"These games are killers + Stop + Boxes must carry warning to prevent under-14s from buying + Stop + Latest info suggests newest cart likely to blow many brains + Stop + Urgent you send reinforcements soonest + Stop + Help! I'm under attack from Razorsoft slaughterers...

Transmission stopped......

Slaughter Sport and the latest, Death Duel, are just two items covered in The Black Marshal's reports from the USA next month, as he goes inside cult games creator Razorsoft.

There'll also be the latest news from Japan following Sega's release of the eagerly-awaited Mega-CD, UK developments from all the software houses, our round-up of essential Sega peripherals, rad prizes to be won and of course all the newest releases reviewed!

Watch out on 23 January for Issue Two of Britain's glossiest, most exciting all-action Sega games mag!

IT'S SEGA FORCE

TOUCH



TURRICAN

STAR CONTROL

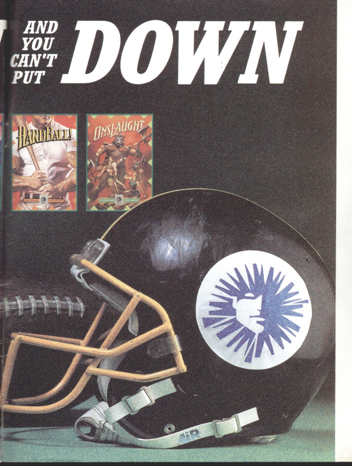
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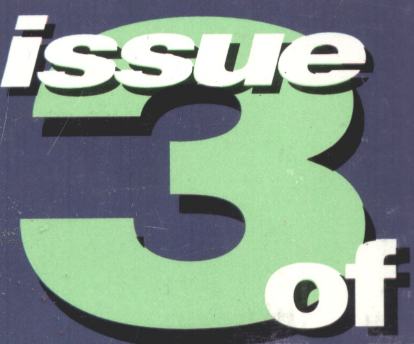


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1.. 2..

3.. 4..

5.. 6..

7.. 8..

9.. 10..

11.. 12..

13.. 14..

15.. 16..

17.. 18..

19.. 20..

21.. 22..

23.. 24..

25.. 26..

27.. 28..

29.. 30..

31.. 32..

33.. 34..

35.. 36..

37.. 38..

(*Right, smartypants, if you can think up any more, write them down on a separate sheet and enclose it with this card!*)

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And here's my choice of games (use MD, MS or GG to indicate)

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